WindoWatch

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WHAT'S   INSIDE

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BASHING   THE   INTERNET

Have you ever been put down by an online critic with the words - "Get a Life!" It's usually said with contempt, even exasperation, by one who has lost patience during a hot exchange.   Win or lose the argument, that experience has all of the elements of the more conventional face-to-face confrontation. The anger is real as is the embarrassing loss of face resulting from public disparagement. Probably the only two people taking note of this relatively mild put down were you and your adversary! Most of us have seen and heard far more graphic and aggressive language in news groups on the Internet.

Internet observers have accused many holding membership in the Million-Mile-SurfingClub of generating electronic images of immature noise, preoccupation with sex and obscenity while hiding their real persona under the cloak of anonymity. Online experience or relationships are trivialized as without substance. Work done during the online day has been made less legitimate, even addictive, than what is accomplished in the real world of commuting, grocery stores, and real people. Thus the mantra Get a Life!

A more tempered definition of electronic interaction is one which uses the term virtual.   Somewhat better, as defined by Webster, but far from accurate. vir-tu-al   *adj.* **1. Being so in effect or essence, although not in actual fact or name; as, he is a virtual stranger, although we've met.**

Superficial examples of what the Internet is about usually fall into the category of tall stories or grandmother's tales. I wish, instead, we paid as much attention to the ills of the larger off-line society, but of course we don't and when we do so, it's short lived and trivial. This phenomena, however, appears to be staying the course!

The truth of the matter is that a lot of what Internetters read and write to one another is quite mundane. Indeed much of everyday off-the-net interaction is also quite mundane. Neither a surprise or cause for alarm!   Why then, does the Internet population have the aura of a bunch of unruly teen agers in need of discipline and control? Why the microscope to dissect this platform? Why the abandonment of the pap of everyday television to the alleged rough and ready environment of the Internet? And finally why the emotional attack by nonmembers upon this loosely constructed virtual society?   **(Continued)**

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No Windows 3.1 Support!

Your zine offers very little for Windows 3.1 users, who are still more numerous than Windows 95 users. The review of ProComm Plus for 3.x was the only thing I found. Even there, the reviewer seemed to be finding fault with it because it was not a Windows 95 32-bit program. I don't think I'll bookmark this site.

Lee Hickling
hickling@radix.net

I asked Gregg Hommel, the author of the First Look piece, if Microsoft still supported Win3.1, and this was his response! lbl

MS, in a minimal way, still supports Win 3.1, although it is no longer anything close to the focus of their current marketing or development. He went on to say:

The article was not a review of PCP/Win 3.0, and was never held out as such. It was not intended to be a complete discussion or review of the product, but my column for the month, and therefore, by it's very nature represented editorial comment.

Since the column was written from the point of view of a Win95 user, in a world becoming increasingly Win95 oriented, there was some focus upon the shortcomings of the application within that context.

I did not "find <sic> fault with it because it was not a Windows 95 32-bit program". I do not believe that anywhere in the article did I find any fault with the application's operations, as that was not my

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intent nor was the actual operation of the application the topic of discussion.

I did take issue with DataStorm, as have many users of PCP/Win, for not releasing both a 16 bit Win 3.1 version and a 32 bit Win95 version in the same package or at the same time. This gives the user the option of installing the appropriate one. I also found fault with DataStorm for limiting options available to the user. This criticism and others were not related to either Win95 or 32 bit applications but with the developer for designing an application which required so much disk space, even in minimum installation configuration, and, ignoring modularity in its design.

Because I was not reviewing the application, nor was the column identified as a review, I did not point out flaws with the package itself, but rather addressed issues of upgrade to current PCP/Win users considering the option. We discussed the possible installation pitfalls and problems, so that users would be informed,and in the process could, hopefully, avoid them. For Win95 users considering the upgrade, this must of necessity, include a discussion of the fact that PCP/Win 3.0 is not a Win95 application. It is a 16 bit Win 3.1 appli-cation compatible with being installed under Win95. Unfortunately, it appears that Datastorm is not very clear about this important fact in their current advertising of the product.

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Workgroup, and Collaborative Computing:
A Context for Lotus Notes Groupware
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People are social creatures. We have built into us the need to be in groups, to interact with others, and to feel that we belong. It should come as no surprise then that since the dawning of the personal computer age, people had to work and compute together while at the same time overcome technical limitations of their systems unwillingness to share information. As connection hardware and software technologies have evolved, it follows that the newfound ability to communicate and share have established an important groupware presence.

It's hard to say when the first modern vision of collaborative computing was first publicized. Before the widespread adoption of personal computers into business, people's ideas of group computing were firmly wedded to the notion of a central mainframe system that owned and ran everything with people using dumb terminals to connect to them. At first, these terminals had no effective computing power. By the time of the introduction of the IBM PC, the so-called dumb terminal actually had lots of intelligence. You could program the terminal to do lots of things, if you knew how. The actual knowledge of how to make a terminal do practically anything we can do today on our PCs was not very widely known then and for the most part confined to hardware vendors who manufactured these devices. The average end user was completely at the mercy of the central

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mainframe if they wanted to do anything on the computer, especially if they wanted to share information stored there with other users.

By the time the personal computer began to invade corporations, some thinkers could imagine how the technology of the time, suitably advanced and refined, could work together more effectively than the model of interactive computing that had evolved from the primitive to sophisticated timesharing of the mainframe. There were many short-comings of mainframes that these people were trying to overcome. Many of these visionaries worked at the research labs of the major corporations such as Xerox PARC, Bell Labs, and IBM. They experienced their computing environment differently from people working with the technology out in business world. It was time for a change and the hardware had finally become a reality. To understand some more of this dramatic change, we have to look back at the history of computers and their first users.

<u>Ancient History</u>

The first years in computer history were very exciting for those involved, but most people never heard of an electronic computer. Indeed, up until the mid-50's, a computer meant a skilled operator of an electronic calculator to perform computations. The tube and wire monstrosities of the time were dubbed electronic computers after a while to avoid confusion. The machine of the time was so fragile that it needed a small army of people to keep it running long enough so that it could complete whatever it was supposed to calculate. Just to give you an idea of relative computing power, the Manchester Mark I, one of the first electronic computers ever built in Britain, had 512 bytes of main memory and 4K bytes of everything else. The clock ran

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at a few tens of kilo-hertz. Today's average digital watch, sold for under a dollar in some places, has about as much memory and runs about 10,000 times faster.

In this environment, people couldn't possibly own their own computer but for those few who had access to one, it was theirs! No-one else knew how to do anything with them, and no-one else really wanted to be close to one. They were huge, hot, and finicky at best. These were the earliest personal computers. When you did something to them, there usually was an immediate effect. The problems that they worked on were usually ones that were directly important to the people around them. Everything was hands on and, indeed most often, the people who worked with the computer, had built it.

This began to change by the middle of the 1950's. There were enough electronic computers out in industry that the human computers were rapidly disappearing. There began to develop a group of people who used computers but seldom saw or touched the real thing. These were the first computer users and they were mainly computer programmers. However, there started to be people who just sub-mitted forms to keypunch operators and got back reports, presumably correct. Computing became work at a distance. The people who used computers the most were lucky to get a carefully guided tour of the computer center once a year. People did work together in groups on projects that involved use of a computer. However, the vast majority of interaction was through punched cards and then waiting until printouts showed up. Using a computer to help a group of people work more effectively together was both beyond comprehension and beyond technology.

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The concept of timesharing was in its embryonic stages by the late 50's and early 60's. People in research labs were learning that they could hook up a typewriter-like gadget to some wires using some black boxes invented for them by the electrical engineering types. They could then connect to a computer further away than just the next room and run the computer, just as if they were working at the real console. By the mid 60's timesharing was a reality for many research labs and a few more forward thinking businesses. People who worked at these places didn't take long before they found ways to leave information to each other via the computer instead of by paper. Thus was born the most primitive electronic mail facilities.

A Golden Age of Sorts

Electronic mail was the start of workgroup and collaborative computing. Except perhaps in the mind's eye of a few thinkers, e-mail was confined to a single machine. This was, to a large extent, the limit of using computers to help people work together throughout much of the 60's. Technology was not standing still, however. Scientists then, just like today, tried their best to make the current state of the art obsolete as fast as they could. Spurred on by projects funded by the Department of Defense and others, computers became networked. One computer could talk to another in a limited fashion and could exchange data with one another purely by electronic means. It took perhaps an instant of thought on the part of the first researchers to include cross-machine e-mail for the data they transmitted.

The software of that time was dominated by many custom applications written by emerging third party vendors specializing in software

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to supplement what a business could write in-house. During the late 60's and early 70's, CRT-type terminals became the standard for interactive computing.   There were no more noisy typewriters and boxes of papers being used up during programming sessions. Higher speed communications lines, faster and bigger computers, and an increasing prevalence of private terminals on each user's desktop made the practical development of applications do more than just exchange simple notes and one line messages to others. For most people, although the sophistication of e-mail software grew, the messages were still firmly tied to one central machine.

The growing presence of private terminals allowed the inclusion of other types of documents under the umbrella of an e-mail system. Electronic document management also developed in its own right. Much of this early work came about because of the long running antitrust lawsuit against IBM during the 70's and 80's. The volume of paper grew so large that IBM decided it had to develop the resources to develop an electronic document management system just to keep track of what their lawyers needed to know. It took time, but e-mail systems began to evolve into office automation systems that did more than e-mail or document management but also began to help in workflow design and management. The first applications designed to help people work better together started appearing in research labs.

<u>The Start of the Personal Computer Revolution and Networking</u>

When personal computers first appeared on corporate desktops, they most often occupied one of two positions: As a standalone work-station dedicated to one important application; or as a mainframe-connected system that allowed their main user to run applications that

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required large amounts of direct interaction and also continued to act as a connection to the mainframe. The mainframe computer was still the keeper of all the important data in a corporation and the only practical way for two personal computers to exchange data if sending a diskette wasn't fast enough.

Fortunately, scientists weren't standing around admiring their work. Networking and LANs where no one computer had a special role to play (peer-to-peer vs. client-server, to attach buzzwords) came into being. Mostly it happened in the mini-computer environment because they were smaller than mainframes, much cheaper, and not powerful enough to do anything on their own. Also, by the time of the earliest personal computers, workstation computers had come into being.

These were systems that tended to be powerful in CPU, dedicated to one user, and ran one or another flavor of the UNIX operating system. UNIX workstations were where researchers at Xerox PARC and other places did pioneering work on GUI interfaces and the use of a mouse as an integrated part of the daily use of a computer. From this early work, three different popular GUI systems entered the personal computer market.

Less well known was the work on Ethernet and ubiquitous fast networking of computers. This is where things got serious for workgroups. People who used these early systems did more than just send e-mail to one another and transfer files from one machine to another. The first networked operating systems were born when people figured out how to connect disks from one system to another so that they appeared to be part of the local system, just slower. The operating system took care of things. Along with this development was the

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maturation of some technology that had been worked on since the early 70's. TCP/IP was fast becoming a standard way for UNIX systems to talk to one another. TCP/IP is very simple, just a way to send small amounts of data from one place to another. Built on top of this simple piece of technology were applications that did far more. The most important thing was that applications on different machines could talk to one another and exchange information if they wanted to, - any kind of information!

Personal computers of the early 80's build on the foundation of the mainframes and established a corporate presence. Unfortunately, they too suffered from the same problems early minicomputers suffered. They were relatively small and underpowered compared to the mainframes of the day. However, it wasn't very long before people started borrowing what they knew from minicomputers and started connecting personal computers to each other instead of just the mainframe. Since personal computers, expensive and underpowered as they were compared to today's versions, were still far less expensive than a minicomputer. They were smaller too, so there were more of them to connect together with more ordinary people using them in in the workplace. Moreover, it was understood very quickly that a personal computer was best used if it was primarily used by one person. This meant that a person who had one of these could keep private data on it. It also meant that what someone worked on while using their computer was there and available to be shared, if there was only a way of sharing it.

Early Personal Computer Workgroup Computing
At first, personal computers weren't very independent. They were small, not very powerful and couldn't hold much data. They still

depended upon the mainframe for anything really important. As the technology advanced, it became possible to build faster machines that could hold lots of information. Unfortunately, they were very expensive compared to personal computers, ran a different operating system, but still cheaper than a minicomputer or a mainframe. Thus, the first steps toward workgroup computing used a server that wasn't a mainframe, but acted like one. All the computers on people's desks connected to it and could share information that way. Since there was only so much one of these servers could do compared to a mainframe or a minicomputer, network designers tended to assign a server to a group of people that worked together and shared information.

Essentially, the first PC servers were mini-mainframes. The personal computer on the desk could talk to the one on someone else's desk only through the server. One of the main differences was that the servers were still the same basic hardware design, although faster and perhaps more well looked after. Another difference was that there were lots of them, relatively speaking, compared to mainframes. The remaining important difference which matters here is that they tended to be grouped together by small organizations of people who worked together, usually in physical proximity.

As personal computer power increased and prices dropped, it became possible to put more and more function into desktop systems. There were e-mail systems, databases, and applications running on servers, but a larger and larger amount of important corporate data came to lie on hard disks in desktop PCs. The earliest mail systems could not deal with other applications easily. If you wanted to send someone a spreadsheet, it was usually easiest to put the data on a file server and tell someone where it was. Also, because DOS predominated, each

software vendor came up with their own way to handle switching between their e-mail application and whatever else their users needed to do. For a while, Desqview became the most popular way to run more than one application at a time which weren't otherwise designed to run alongside another one. Waiting in the wings was something more powerful and more complex, - multitasking GUI systems!

Multitasking and GUIs

Multitasking has been around a long time. The first operating systems to do so were running on mainframes by the early 50's. It didn't take long after personal computers came out to have multitasking on them too. The problem was that ordinary people didn't know and, for the most part, didn't care. The original IBM PC and most of its descendants, until very recently, started out on DOS. It didn't have a GUI and it didn't multitask. If you knew and cared about either of these two, you either replaced DOS with something that did have these, or you had to run something on top of DOS to allow multi-tasking to happen.

GUIs were a very controversial thing. As one wag put it, using icons instead of words implies that the user can't read. That's usually far from the truth. However, the advantages of GUIs are often overhyped. The intuitiveness of a GUI is marketing. What an effective GUI brings to computing is a more visual metaphor that emphasizes being able to go from a starting point and getting to an ending point by following certain actions. There is no requirement to memorize highly arbitrary command names and parameters. To someone who has never used a computer before, a GUI is as intuitive as a nuclear reactor. Effective GUI and GUI application design is consistent enough so that one set

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of actions and its consequences can be carried from on application to another. That is the advantage of GUIs.

Multitasking, GUIs, and LANs are enabling technologies. Something that was impossible before now becomes possible. The common appearance of multitasking on desktops meant that people could have things running in the background doing tasks without explicit user action. In particular, a program could watch for and alert a user to something that they need to know about. A GUI creates a demand for more screen real estate. This means that more items can be on the screen at one time, showing various aspects of the same thing. Finally, LANs allow computers to talk to each other and exchange information.

Workgroups and Groupware

The confluence of more powerful hardware and enabling technologies allowed personal computers to connect together and work together much as the people that used them did. What remained to happen was software that used the technologies and hardware in ways that couldn't have happened before.

The first uses of LANs for workgroup computing paralleled that of the first uses of mainframes for people in an organization. The easiest thing to do was to merely share files and printers. This in itself was a cost savings for corporations and sometimes made things easier by allowing the same file to be visible to several people at a time. However it was still a manual effort to ensure their contents were synchronized. Once it became possible to have applications directly talking to each other, e-mail started happening. The server still kept every-

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thing, because it was the only entity allowed to actually write to its files, when designed this way. There was never an issue of destruction. Documents for the most part remained separate because there wasn't a common basis for document exchange. Everyone had to use the same document creation tool or else there would be chaos.

During the late 70's and early 80's, electronic conferencing systems started being used. Conferencing is distinct from e-mail in the sense that anyone who had privileges could read new content. No one had to explicitly send you anything. You looked when you wanted to. Around the same time, as e-mail on the Internet started becoming more prevalent, mailing lists appeared too. They required explicit subscription and was also a broadcast mechanism, but only to those waiting to hear. Conferencing worked more like traditional broadcast radio or TV.

In the middle to late 80's, groupware became an important buzzword. What exactly groupware was became harder to pinpoint. The fundamental problem everyone was trying to address was how to use a small network of computers to help a group of people with common data and responsibilities work better together. This is a very broad definition. Pure e-mail systems can be billed as groupware, and many systems were so designated. Document management and people scheduling were often lumped together under the label groupware too.

Today, the definition of groupware has narrowed slightly, if only because many of the tools that first came out evolved toward a common set of features. Anyone that sells a groupware product today must provide e-mail, document management, and data sharing. Very frequently occurring, is time management, databases, presentation

graphics, and remote access. Groupware as a term was hyped so much and defined so vaguely that the term used today is collaborative computing. The tools and the goals are the same, but the definition has been clarified by nearly a decade of experience.

Lotus Notes

Lotus Notes is a collaborative computing product. It is one of the earliest, the most well known. It is still the most popular of the systems for collaborative computing. What it brings to the plate as such a product, is a design built around a system of servers and clients. The clients are the ordinary computers sitting on users desktops or those that they carry with them on the road. Servers stay at the place of business and hold everything in document databases. These databases are unlike what people normally think of as a database such as Paradox, Dbase, Foxpro, or Access. All items in a single table in a traditional database have to have the same format. A document database allows each document in the database to be different, to contain different items, and to be wildly different in display format. The Notes database allows people to keep copies of what they are working on with them, but exchange information with the server when they want to update the contents of a document.

For most people, there is no point in running Notes unless they are part of a workgroup that will remain together for some period of time. There are more cost effective and less resource-hungry solutions for a single person to keep track of their personal information. Once part of a workgroup though, Notes allows many things to be managed by it. E-mail in Notes is just a special database where there is one for each user of a server. The server itself also has a database of its own for

outbound mail directed to another server or for a gateway to another type of system. Everything else is a database too. If a group wants to do conferencing, they create a single database where everyone can create new documents or add to an existing one, but no-one can delete documents except the administrator. Reference information databases are even simpler because someone needs to verify its contents before adding or making changes.

Notes databases are complex entities compared to traditional databases. A database in Notes can have only one view or it can have many views. Depending on their privileges, a person may be able to update a view, look at a view, or not even see that the view exists. Within a view are one or more fields containing data. Some data may be shown only in one view. Other data might be entirely hidden, while others might always be visible. Data in fields might depend on data in other fields in the same document, fields in other documents, or hidden fields not visible in any view. With LotusScript, a programmer can attach actions to fields, place buttons that perform actions and generate or delete documents or data. Notes keeps track of what each person has seen in a particular database so that it has the notion of read and unread documents. It also is a hypertext document database system. There can be links in the documents connecting to other parts of the document, other documents in the same database, or documents in another database. With recent versions of Notes, the links might even be in HTML and connect to pages on the Web.

Because Notes is a document database system, it comes with a reasonably powerful built-in word processor and has capabilities of importing many different document types. The Windows version of the client is OLE-enabled which allows users to embed objects into a

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Notes document. There are also ways to attach files of an arbitrary type to a Notes document if it can't be imported.

These features alone don't distinguish Lotus Notes from other early groupware applications. What made Notes special was how it managed synchronization of its databases and exchanged information with other servers and clients. This key feature is called replication and is now a generic term used for any similar type of activity between peer applications. What happens is that each person can create a private replica of any Notes database enabled for replication. This copy sits on the machine that it has been replicated to. After the copy has been made, there is no need to access the original to see information in the database. This in itself is nothing special. The special part about it is that Notes keep track of changes to a database and remembers them so that whenever it needs to, it can check with the original and exchange documents as required to update both the original and its copy. This is a two way replication.

An example of this is a replica of an e-mail database. Notes users typically replicate their mailbox from the server to their machine. Aside from running faster from the local hard drive, it means that if the database is on a portable computer, the portable can be taken home and the database updated. After reading mail, deleting junk, writing replies, and writing new mail, either by modem or back at work through the LAN and updating the copy on the server with all the changes. At the same time, the server might have accumulated new mail for the user. During the replication process, all that new mail would be transferred to the user's local copy. After a replication event, the e-mail databases would be identical.

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Notes manages its own security and there are many, many ways to limit privileges to databases. Whether someone can change a database or view, it is only one level of access control. It also uses RSA or DES encryption to protect contents, passwords, and signatures. With public key encryption like RAS, electronic authorization and signatures are easy to make happen.

Summary

Notes is the most visible of a fairly large set of collaborative computing tools. It provides many powerful capabilities for workgroups to enhance their productivity. It is not useful for individuals unless they intend to connect to services that use Notes for their document management. Because of its programmability, Notes can be used in a huge number of ways. However, because it is a large system, it requires time to learn and use effectively. As the Internet expands its presence into more and more homes and businesses, workgroup computing will still encompass a small number of people, but collaborative computing will include everyone who is connected and has permission to access the Notes server. Applications like Notes will eventually become a part of everyone's set of computer tools.

Herb Chong is the author of many fine WindoWatch articles. A distinguished computer professional, he is the Contributing Editor of WindoWatch and guest edited its anniversary issue.

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Adobe PageMaker 6.01   *A Product Review*

DTP Standard Bearer?

Copyright 1996 Kent D. Bentkowski

I have to admit up front that I have been a registered user of Ventura Publisher since their MS-DOS version 1.0 that ran on the ancient GEM interface. That was in 1985, before PageMaker had been publicly released. This is the main reason why I come to PageMaker so late in life. I also came to the realization that it had become over the years, a true piece of industry standard desktop design software.

I am a PageMaker newbie . . but! Actually, I had stumbled upon PageMaker in a far more round-

> This is a negative review. Adobe was invited to respond on this same page! They have ignored the invitation! *lbl*

about way. A few years ago, the United States federal government had decided that Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF) was to be their universal electronic stand-ard. Since this document format was tightly controlled by Adobe, publishing software produced by any other company wasn't PDF enabled. I was left with two choices; continue with Ventura Publisher (which had been purchased by Canada's Corel Corporation), or learn one of the Adobe products that can produce the PDF format.

With learning curves being what they are with these types of pro-grams, I wasn't looking forward to learning an entirely new system, especially after a decade of regular Ventura upgrades. Nonetheless, it was an opportunity to check out what Adobe had to offer. I was

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surprised on a number of levels; some positive, but most extremely negative, I am sorry to report.

You must understand that this entire matter is a direct result of the battle between desktop standards created for both the Macintosh and Windows platforms. When Aldus Corporation released version 1.0 of PageMaker in 1985, there wasn't an alternative to the Macintosh edition. In fact, history proved that there wouldn't be suitable power in the Windows platform to properly handle a program like Page-Maker until 1992, with the release of Windows 3.1. This seven year lead gave PageMaker a huge jump in development and market share.

Realizing that Adobe practically owns the entire desktop publishing market on the Macintosh platform with products like Photoshop, Illustrator, PageMaker, and Acrobat, and that Corel Corporation products rule the roost on the Windows side, the natural thing for me would have been to upgrade to the 32-bit Ventura Publisher. I would have done just that, if the largest employer in the USA, the Federal Government, hadn't made the Adobe PDF file format their electronic standard. As with other computer issues, personal experience has taught most of us that the wisest approach is to stay current with current industry standards.

. . . so, I inserted the CD-ROM into its' caddy, and waited for the Windows 95 autoplay feature to kick in . . . .

<u>Installation</u>

My very first impression during installation was one of great relief that this program would work with my pre-existing library of over 4,000 True Type fonts. As I have invested heavily in True Type font technology, this was extremely good news!! However, Adobe has

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included, to their credit, a free copy of their Type On Call CD-ROM, containing over 2,000 fonts in their own proprietary TYPE 1 format.

The bad news is that in order to use these TYPE 1 fonts, I need to have Adobe Type Manager installed on my system. In addition, the fonts on the CD-ROM are locked, with the exception of a small starter pack, which would be useful only if the user doesn't own any fonts beforehand. Because I already own an entire competing CD-ROM type library, the inclusion of the Type On Call CD-ROM is for people like me, redundant.

The single upside is that if I register the Type On Call CD-ROM, I get to unlock two individual fonts from a select group of eight. It might have been worth installing ATM if any of the group of eight was a font currently in "fashion." Alas, there was nothing new there either.

Custom install took twenty minutes, including selecting the programs import/export filters, plug-ins, templates, dictionaries, which come with 3 - US English, UK English, and French Canadian, color match- ing palettes (includes TRUMATCH, several Pantone palettes, and Focaltone, among several others), and electronic registration.

I could NOT get electronic registration to work properly, so I gave up and mailed in the card instead.

To their tremendous credit, Adobe has loaded all of the following software on the PageMaker 6.01 CD-ROM:

♦ **Adobe PageMaker 6.01**
♦ **Adobe Type Manager 3.02**
♦ **Acrobat Distiller PE 2.1**

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- **Acrobat Reader 2.1**
- **Photoshop LE 3.04**
- **QuickTime 2.03**
- **Type On Call CD-ROM 4.1**

<u>Documentation:</u>

A big plus of the PageMaker 6.01 package is the printed document-
ation. This is a trait that all Adobe products share, thank God. Over
the years, perhaps the biggest deficiency in computer software has
been in the absence of easy to understand and high-quality document-
ation.

In my opinion of the hundreds of programs I have either used, review-
ed, or beta tested, only two software publishers have succeeded in pro-
viding what I would consider to be adequate printed materials. The
other company beside Adobe, is Microsoft. But, even Microsoft, has
only recently achieved this plateau with the release of their manual
<u>Getting Results with Microsoft Office for Windows 95</u>.

Adobe has targeted the high-end publishing market, which is clearly
evident by the inclusion of a first-class booklet entitled <u>Adobe Print
Publishing Guide</u>. This is by far, the best end user book I have ever
read which explains the print publishing process beyond the desktop.
I have the luxury of fifteen years commercial printing experience, and
can vouch for the accuracy of the information presented there.

The manuals were all organized nicely, and were printed with high
quality paper and inks. The enclosed <u>Print Publishing Guide</u> is an
excellent primer, explaining many difficult concepts in an easy to

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understand manner. This should be kept as a general reference, in the user's reference library.

For those graphic designers who are less experienced in this area of project fulfillment, the <u>Adobe Print Publishing Guide</u> shows them that a design job is far from over when it leaves the desktop. Every Adobe software customer already has access to this fantastic reference, as the eighty page document is included in all of Adobe's publishing software products.

Adobe is a company that takes great pride in providing a high quality product. They usually succeed. However, PageMaker 6.01 is now an exclusive Windows 95 product, with no port backwards for Windows 3.1. That means that you absolutely must upgrade to Windows 95 to even use PageMaker 6.01.

This is fine for the record setting thirty million people who already have the Windows 95 operating system installed on their systems, while it is bad for the one hundred million Windows 3.1 registered users who have yet to take the Win95 plunge. Well, what are y'all waiting for?

<u>First Impressions:</u>

As I began, the thing that I was most interested in was the exact pro-cedure involved in converting files into the PDF (portable document format) of Acrobat. To have that ability, I had to install a PostScript driver for my printer (HP LaserJet III) and the Acrobat Distiller Plug-In. PageMaker comes with several plug-ins, one specifically for WWW publishing, called HTML Author, that converts the programs paragraph style tags into HTML style tags. This will enable Page-

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Maker files to be easily converted into HTML format for publishing on the Web.

Interface:

When I booted up the program for the first time, I thought that some-one had stolen all of PageMaker's toolbars. Later, as I began to read the chapter on the interface in the manual, I was saddened to learn that toolbars are non-existent in this program. Adobe uses a floating palette metaphor, which can crowd many unrecognizable buttons onto a small palette.

The text control palette is a complete mess! I am NOT looking for-the case of the text control palette, Tooltips are also absent from Page-Maker. That completely ruins any chance I might have had to make some sense of that awful text control palette! Sheesh!
Perhaps to make up for the lack of toolbars, PageMaker has oodles and oodles of keyboard shortcuts, which deviate greatly from the Windows standard shortcuts. The shortcuts are also extremely unintuitative. To call up the text tool, you might suspect CTRL+T or ALT+T. Nope! Here, to call up the text tool, press SHIFT+F2. This is bad! Worse yet, none of these oddball key commands are at all in sync with established Windows standards.

Internet

The Internet is without any doubt, the hottest technology topic in recent times. PageMaker boasts the ability to output to HTML format. But, here Adobe scrumps the dog again. Their real and true awareness of the Internet is no more than skin deep. Gentle obsession, instead of true mission.

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A rather curious and completely obvious oversight is to be found in the programs Document Setup dialog box. This program, which is touted as being Internet aware, doesn't even have the ability to output at 72 dpi, which is far and away the standard for graphics on the World Wide Web.

Logic tells me that if I were truly serious about supporting the document formats of the Internet, then I would have to at a minimum, support the output formats of all of its' standard software. 72 dpi probably would be at the top of my list. Adobe simply didn't know they did anything wrong, and still doesn't, to this day. The absence of a patch correcting the 72 dpi oversight is all the proof I need.

Does it HAVE to be like this?

PageMaker was originally written for the Macintosh and later ported to Windows. Notwithstanding the truth of the above criticism, to be fair, I must suggest that perhaps Adobe was trying to give Windows users access to Macintosh tools.

As already stated, the PageMaker 6.01 CD-ROM contains a copy of Photoshop LE 3.04. It is beyond coincidence that all the menus and shortcuts fit in perfectly with PageMaker . Adobe is no more or less guilty than good ol' Microsoft of *the look and feel*, as they might say.

Conclusion

It might seem that I'm just whining about learning a new way of doing things. Anyone who has ever really known me, knows the opposite is the case. However, new ways must also be better ways of performing tasks.

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To address my own scenario; if I had wanted a Macintosh experience, I would have purchased one. This is not meant offend! The Macintosh has simply lost the war of who will control the desktop standard. That is not to suggest that the best product won! Neither Windows 95 nor Windows NT are perfect programs.

On reflection, this review of PageMaker 6.01 has really became a discussion about standards, and the holy wars waged by those dedicated to control them. If PageMaker 6.01 is an attempt to pacify both Windows and Apple users, the Gods of Code at Adobe have failed miserably.

Kent Daniel Bentkowski has been involved with personal computers since the early 1980's, well before the introduction of Microsoft Windows. Using a PC in the family business, a commercial printing company, he focused on marketing and production. He is the author of the Windows95 Registry FAQ and a series for *WindoWatch* __The Secrets of a WebMaster__ which focuses upon creating Web documents.

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The Power Users Compuserve Navigator
Copyright 1996 by John M. Campbell

Much of the information focus today is on the Internet, and rightly so. Usenet carries thousands of newsgroups, covering almost every possible topic people might want to discuss, as well as some topics many of us would rather avoid. Nonetheless, the major online services, such as Compuserve and AOL, are still alive and well, and these services have their own extensive discussion groups, called Forums on CIS. Just as Usenet and BBSs have spawned an assortment of offline navigators, so has Compuserve. CIS's own WinCim software is not well-suited to Forum work, because it is an online program. The advantage of working offline as much as possible is the same, regardless of the service. Online time costs money.

Compuserve, like BBSs and Usenet, have traditionally used an ASCII message format. But ASCII, although still available in many areas of the service, is slowly being replaces by a new, proprietary, interface called HMI. HMI is a data-transfer and control protocol between the CIS computers and the user's computer. It operates somewhat like the Zmodem protocol, where data is transmitted in packets, using an error-control mechanism. CIS is switching to this protocol because it is more adaptable to mini-computers (they want to abandon their old mainframe equipment), and less prone to the effects of line noise.

Unfortunately, the switch over has broken the traditional DOS offline navigation tools, such as OzCis and Tapcis, which expect ASCII

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text. The makers of the various products are scrambling to release HMI-compatible Windows versions. (I know of only one HMI-aware DOS navigator - Ciscomm. A Windows version of Ciscomm is due by fall 1996.) This article will focus on one recent Windows-based CIS navigator, OzWin 11, from Ozarks West Software.

Steve Sneed, the developer of OzWin, enjoyed great success with the DOS-based OzCis navigator. His first Windows effort, OzWin 1, didn't fare as well. That program, in its initial release, was plagued with numerous bugs, including problems with Windows 95. Some bugs were eventually fixed, but then came the Compuserve switch-over to eight-character filenames, and OzWin 1 was never updated to handle the new format. Instead, Sneed decided to redo the program as a strictly HMI product, using Borland's Delphi 1.0, and doing much of the development under Windows 95. However, the new version is still a 16-bit program. A Windows 95 version is planned.

OzWin 11 ships with a meager 22-page New Users Guide. Most of the help is online. The manual does suffice, however, to install the program. There is a warning to avoid installing over earlier versions of either the DOS or Windows product. Unfortunately, no tools are included for converting forum configurations and Address Books from earlier versions. However, several users have written suitable conversion tools, available in the Ozcis Forum on CIS. Existing OzCis mail and message files can be moved to the new version without any conversion.

The first time OzWin loads, the user is greeted by a general config-uration screen. There are nine tabbed dialogs labeled General, Colors, Sounds, Editors, CISMail, MultiUser, Forum Defaults, Online,

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Scripts and Other. The Forum Defaults dialog alone contains no less than twenty-two check-boxes! Fortunately, most of the configuration items can be left at default value, at least until one becomes familiar with the program. But, why so many choices?

First, Compuserve forum operation is more complex than BBS or Usenet conference operation. Where every conference on those services is devoted to a single topic, a CIS forum can have many sub-forums (sections). And, like BBS conferences, messages can be addressed to "all," or to a specific user. (Usenet messages are always addressed to "all.") Further, Compuserve navigators are expected to retrieve and catalog forum file catalogs, both single-line listings and full descriptions, called abstracts.

Another reason for the complexity of OzWin's configuration is the author's desire to make the program as flexible as possible. It seems that every Compuserve power-user works forums a bit differently, and quite a few had input into the product's design. Whether this degree of flexibility is good or bad must be decided by the end user. OzWin definitely is not the ideal first offline navigator for novices.

The next step in initial configuration is setting up communications parameters. These parameters control how OzWin connects to Compuserve and the modem initialization parameters. This part is easy if the user already has Compuserve's own Wincim 2.0 up and running. OzWin simply uses that program's existing CIS.INI file. Otherwise, the UserID, password, CIS node phone numbers, modem characteristics, etc., must be entered.

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A final general and mail configuration screen consists of a page with eight tabs. Here, program-wide settings for mail signature, file paths, sounds, colors, and the like are chosen. One can also choose to retrieve local weather forecasts, stock quotes, and the What's New listing. Other options permit hiding tool bars and changing editor settings. Again, its best to accept default values until one becomes familiar with the program.

Several preconfigured forums ship with the program. Others can be added individually, or converted from the DOS version. Each forum is either active or inactive, and its state can be toggled. Here is how OzWin typically is used. The user activates the desired forums, then goes online to retrieve message headers and/or new file listings for the selected sections in each active forums. This is called a new pass. The program then goes offline.

Now, the user invokes a feature called Quickscan to view the message headers and decide what action to take for each header. Normally, some hearers will be tagged Read. Others will be ignored (skipped). The Quickscan window displays how many messages are included in each thread, so the user knows which headers represent messages that have replies. On subsequent passes, the Quickscan window divides into sections previously read, new, skipped, etc. This makes it handy to follow threads of interest.

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```
Mrk Subject                        #Msg   Root#     Section            To
********************** Read Previously **************************
  R Attic Exhaust Fan              11   123984   4/Heating & Cooling
  R Best Central AC Unit?           1   123887   4/Heating & Cooling
  R Good Unit, Good Price?          5   123916   4/Heating & Cooling
  R Lennox bids                     8   126437   4/Heating & Cooling
  R Lennox Complete Heat            3   123759   4/Heating & Cooling
  R New AC Unit                     2   126784   4/Heating & Cooling
  R Quiet Attic Fan                 2   126065   4/Heating & Cooling
  R Selecting Right A/C             3   123789   4/Heating & Cooling
  R protect wpaper in bathrm        5   126253   5/Paint & Wallpaper
  R Garbage Disposal removal        5   125111   6/Plumbing
  R roots in sewer pipes            5   126503   6/Plumbing
**************************** Skipped ****************************
    Installation of marble,         1   126673   1/About TFH/Forum
    !Award Winner                    1   125917   1/About TFH/Forum
    ** Kitty Giggles **              1   124735   1/About TFH/Forum
```

Another window can be opened to show file listings. Again, the user can tag those that are of interest for action. Either the full description or the file itself can be marked for download.

Several other actions can be taken during a new pass. Mail is automatically retrieved. The CIS What's New listing can be obtained, if desired. Weather forecasts and maps for a selected region can also be retrieved. There is even a provision for downloading stock information to update a portfolio. Stock information can be saved to a separate file in Quicken format, and stock-related news can be retrieved from Executive News Service at the same time.

Once all desired actions are specified, the user tells OzWin to do a Send pass. The program goes online again, and performs whatever actions are needed. Now, messages can be read, and replies prepared, files can be examined, etc. The message read window features yet

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another row of icons, and a small header pane appears above the message text pane, so the user can keep track of which message they are seeing.
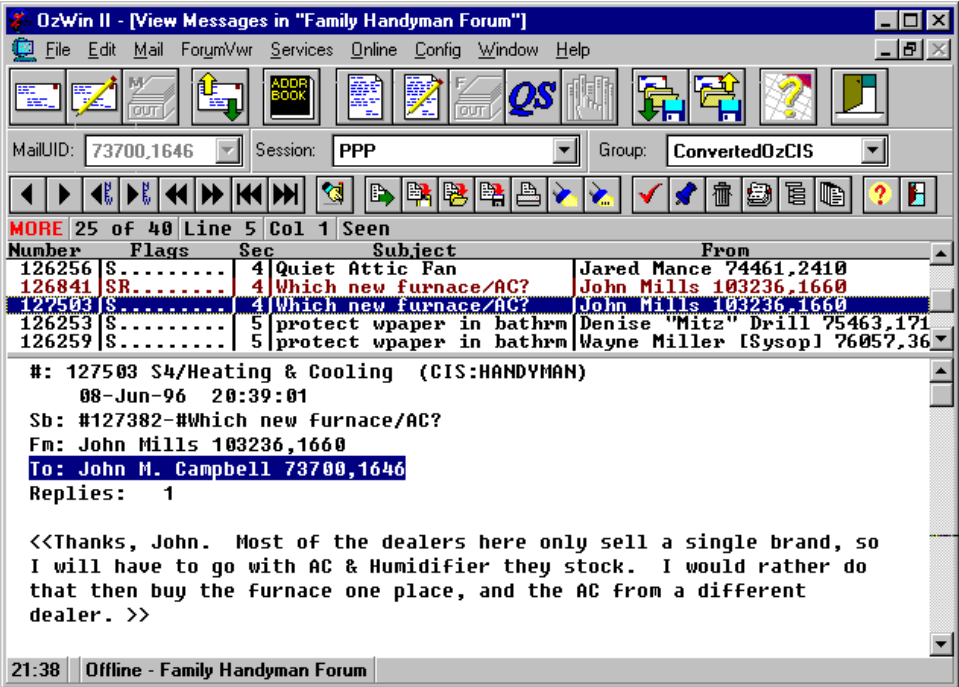
This description is only one possible scenario. Some users want to retrieve the full text of all messages in certain forums with a single pass. Others may want to see only messages addressed to them. These preferences, and much more, can be configured.

OzWin includes capable editors for composing mail and forum

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messages, and these too have numerous configuration options for font size, indents, word-wrap. etc. Mail and message management tools are provided, and these are extremely useful. Messages can be saved to text files or to folders, and the user can give these folders meaningful descriptions - no more 8.3 DOS filenames to remember. While messages can be sorted in just about every imaginable way, there is no provision for killing messages (from certain people or on certain topics) you may not want to read.

Logs can be generated for tracking all forum activity, downloads, and errors reported by CIS while online. The last log is useful when trying to chase down elusive bugs that sometimes occur, such as "packet underflow" errors.

The program does not include binary file viewers, but external viewers can be specified for GIF, JPEG, or other types of files. Previous DOS versions of the program had a built-in GIF viewer, but the author feared problems after the controversy that erupted some time ago concerning the legal ownership of the code used by Compuserve for the GIF format.

OzWin is a powerful program for those who know there way around Compuserve, but it does have some problem areas. The main OzWin window takes some getting used to. The eight pull-down menus, and the fourteen-item toolbar just below, are conventional enough, as is the Options Bar, which shows . A tool that is not obvious from its icon can be identified by resting the mouse-pointer on the icon for a second or so. A small box appears with an explanation. This helpful tooltip feature is used through the program, and it really comes in handy when setting options.

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I said the window takes some getting used to because most of it is devoted to a display of the available forums. But much of the space is wasted. Only ten forums are visible at 640 x 480 resolution, making it necessary to scroll the screen sideways to see more forums. And the highlight bar is truly ugly. It is too large, and worse, all information below the bar is invisible, unless the bar is on an active forum!
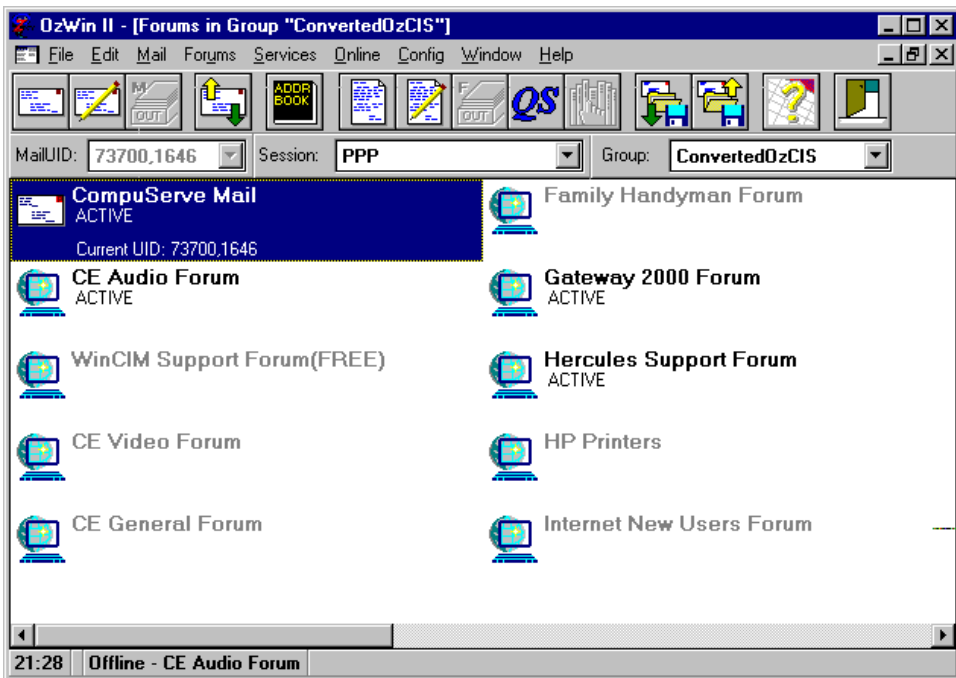
The odd toolbar behavior is caused by the program's use of color. The toolbar uses the Windows highlight default, normally dark blue. The text that identifies each forum is black for active forums, gray for

forums that are inactive. The highlight bar properly displays the black text as white on dark blue. But it fails to show the gray text at all when over an inactive forum. Users who register complaints in the Ozcis Forum are told that the fault lies with Windows, and to change the Windows default highlight color to something else. This explanation is, of course, rubbish. Other programs don't exhibit this problem. Hopefully, this bug will be corrected.

The ungainly appearance of the main window can be (somewhat) improved by switching to 800 x 600 resolution, changing the highlight bar to light blue, and turning off the display of oversized forum icons. Now, 26 forums can be seen. If the user is willing to hide the tool bar and the options bar, up to 32 forums will be shown without the need to scroll the screen.

However, these may not be viable options for users who have 14 inch monitors. Further, there is another cosmetic problem that can't be overcome. Below each forum name, there is a line that is intended to show whether that forum is active, and the status of online actions due or already taken. Abbreviations are used to show that there are file downloads, messages retrieved, etc., for that forum. But these abbreviations are all the same color; black for active forums, gray for inactive - the same as the forum name. They don't stand out! Several times, I failed to activate a forum where I had requested that some online action be taken, because the action designator wasn't obvious.

In my opinion, the menus and the toolbar are not logically organized. For example, the toolbar has an icon to view file abstracts, but none to view single-line file descriptions. That function is buried several levels deep in the menu structure.

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Further, the toolbar cannot be configured to contain icons for the functions a user might want there - another oversight that needs correcting. The menus themselves cascade three levels deep in some instances. Perhaps that is inevitable, considering the power of the program.

Several extremely helpful features are missing. There is no way to refuse junk mail, an increasing frustration on Compuserve. And there is no provision for using macros to reduce multiple keystrokes. I hope that these oversights will be corrected in the next updated release.

Interface comparisons are inevitable. I kept wishing that the author had designed an interface similar to that used by the Forte Agent Usenet news program, where subscribed conferences appear in one pane, message headers in a second pane, and message bodies in a third pane - all in the same window - with each pane easily resizable. Using such an interface, OzWin would feature distinctive colored icons to the right of forum names and message headers, to show what action is being taken.

But nitpicks aside, OzWin is probably the most powerful tool currently available for serious Compuserve forum addicts. I highly recommend it to those who need, and can appreciate, its many features. Casual users need to look elsewhere.

John M. Campbell has contributed many articles to *WindoWatch*. He keeps climbing the mountains he finds in the computer world just because "They're there!" John is the manager of the West Virginia Unemployment Compensation Office in Elkins, WV.

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FIRST LOOK AT NT 4.0 SERVER BETA 2

By Linda L. Rosenbaum

Just about the time the last issue of WindoWatch was released, I received NT 4.0 Server Beta 2 (build 1314). I set aside some time that following weekend and eagerly installed it. Since I had a fair number of programs installed and operational in Beta 1, I chose to install Beta 2 as an upgrade over Beta 1. Normally this is considered an unwise thing to do with Beta software, but I decided to take a chance. If it installed properly, I would have saved a lot of reinstallation and set up time. It also gave me an opportunity to see how an upgrade would be performed as compared to the fresh new install I did with Beta 1.

My upgrade installation seemed to go quite well. However, I have since learned that people are having varying amounts of success with doing an upgrade to Beta 2 over Beta 1 or over NT 3.51. So while my upgrade did seem to go without problems, I thus took this to indicate that the upgrade process was successful. Upgrading over earlier installations of NT is an area that is in need of work and has been so acknowledged by Microsoft.

I did note that various components that had to be installed separately with Beta 1, such as WordPad, Pinball, and Internet Explorer, have all been integrated into the initial installation/set up process. In addition, it is quite easy to leave out some or all of these types of components and install them later on. I chose to install Pinball and WordPad but left out installing Internet Explorer for now. I was a bit

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nervous about mucking up my well working Netscape Navigator 3.0 Beta. In addition NT 4.0 comes with Internet Explorer 2.0 and there already is a Beta of version 3.0 available. I also noted that several sound schemes, as in Windows 95, are included with NT 4.0 and one can chose how much or how little of them to install. I chose to install them all, even though I had created my own sound scheme in Beta 1 and am still using it.

My various network components were upgraded and it was kind of nice not to have to answer a bunch of questions and remember the precisely correct answers. Also upgraded was RAS (Remote Access Services), which is part of networking. More on this later on. Likewise, my sound card and DAT tape drive drivers were upgraded. Both of these have to be installed separately in an initial installation of NT.
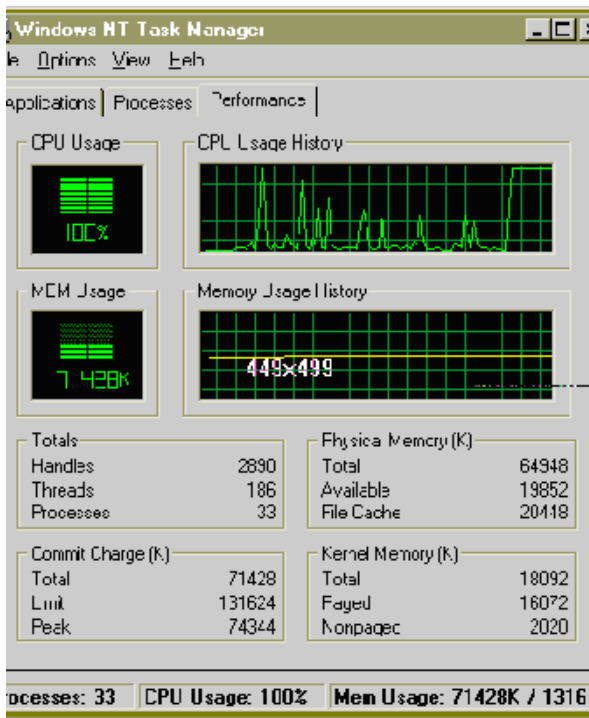
After the upgrade and restart, I started looking around. First thing I noticed was that a defined sound (in my sound scheme) that did not work properly in Beta 1 was now working perfectly. This particular sound, which is set to play when starting a program, also doesn't work properly for me in Windows 95. I noticed that an icon had not been created in the games group for Pinball. I have no idea why this didn't work properly, but I went ahead and added it myself. I also noticed that my Remote Access Service group was now empty! I had a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach, but did figure out after the initial panic subsided, that several components had been moved elsewhere and that some had been renamed. In hindsight I realized that some of this was also mentioned in the readme files that came with the new Beta. I also discovered a few other empty groups which I got rid of once I determined there was no reason to keep them.

The next thing I did was to rerun the benchmarks I had run for Beta 1. Much to my surprise and amusement, the Disk WinMark 96

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benchmark test would not complete properly. About half way through the test I got an error message to the effect that a DOS file operation that was supposed to fail succeeded during the test. And the bench-mark was halted. While some of the benchmarks did improve, I believe the differences fall within the normal range of benchmarks. Hence I concluded that as far as these tests were concerned, Beta 2 was neither statistically faster or slower than Beta 1 on my system.

I then proceeded to test some specific programs that were problems on my system with Beta 1. Some now work fine (such as SCSIBench from EZ-SCSI 4.0 and Grolier 1996 Multimedia Encyclopedia) and others do not (Powerchute v/s software from APC). I also did determine that Beta 2 still cannot read mixed CD's - ones with both audio CD and regular CD data. The very same CD's are easily read on my system in both Windows 95 and NT 3.51.

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Windows NT Task Manager

File Options View Help

Applications | Processes | Performance |

CPU Usage
100%

CPU Usage History

MEM Usage
71428K

Memory Usage History
449x499

Totals
Handles   2890
Threads   186
Processes   33

Physical Memory (K)
Total   64948
Available   19852
File Cache   20418

Commit Charge (K)
Total   71428
Limit   131624
Peak   74344

Kernel Memory (K)
Total   18092
Paged   16072
Nonpaged   2020

Processes: 33   CPU Usage: 100%   Mem Usage: 71428K / 1316

After this testing, I spent some time exploring the new Beta and the new or improved parts which I could easily see and/or test. The first I played with was Task Manager. Task Manager has been an integral part of NT for some time. However it has been significantly enhanced in Beta 2 and is now a wonderful tool to keep track of certain aspects of performance as well as to be able to kill errant processes or programs. Task Manager in Beta 2 is opened in the same way as in Beta 1, by right clicking on the task bar and selecting Task Manager. Task Manager now has three major components - applications, processes and performance. Each is a tab in Task Manager. Applications lists the running applications. From here one can switch to a specific application, end it, or start a new one. Processes lists all processes running at that time. One can select a host of details to display on each process such as PID (process identifier), CPU Usage, CPU Time, and Memory Usage. One can also end a process in here. Performance tracks CPU usage as well as memory usage. When Task Manager is minimized, an icon indicating CPU usage is displayed right next to the volume control icon in the task bar. This serves as an excellent tool for keeping an eye on the system performance as it relates to CPU usage. I now keep Task Manager open and minimized all the time. I

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do restore it at times to check up on specific processes or memory usage or to end a specific task when it has stopped responding properly.

I then moved to RAS or what is now called Dial-Up Networking. Since I had upgraded, I did not have to start from scratch to install it. I believe RAS is initially installed using the same procedures as in Beta 1 and NT 3.51. However the RAS phone book is now called Dial-Up Networking. It follows the Windows 95 interface and look. It seems to contain pretty much the same information as the old RAS phone book. However it took me a while to figure out where each component is and I suspect one or two are somewhat different or not as expanded. My entries that carried over all work fine, which was quite a relief to me. I personally have very mixed reactions to Dial-Up Networking (DUN). I suppose the interface makes it easier to install and set up, but I cannot see that for sure. It seems to me to be a bit slower in that when I need to dial, I have to wait for an extra dialog box to open up and then hit the dial button.

I have now been using Beta 2 for almost two weeks and have run into several problems that I did not see in Beta 1 (or NT 3.51). At this point in time, I am not certain if these are due to problems in Beta 2, due to some interaction that is more specific to my hardware and/or software, or due to the fact that I need to change some settings somewhere that I have not as of yet identified. With the new Task Manager and its ready display of CPU usage, I have noted that my CPU usage periodically jumps to 100% even though I am doing exactly what I was doing the second before it jumped. This causes my performance to often drop significantly until the CPU usage drops back down to a more normal level. Some of my 16bit windows programs seem to now hog the CPU when online (100% CPU usage) whereas they did not in Beta 1 or in NT 3.51. I am not sure if this is due to some interaction with the new/"improved" DUN or something

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else. Again, though, this harms my overall performance significantly because it makes it very tough to do anything else at the same time effectively. When I need to change to a different partition, such as to open a file, it takes a very long time for the drop down box to appear. This was slow in Beta 1 as compared to NT 3.51 or Windows 95, but is even slower in Beta 2. The Beta 2 notes do discuss a pause with respect to networks (that will be fixed in the final release) but I am not sure if what I am seeing here is a function of this or not. It also seems to me that reading drives on the network is much slower than it was in Beta 1 (or NT 3.51). Most of the time after I run Procomm Plus for Windows 2.11, my port is not released when I close it up. I have found no way to force NT to release the port and have had to restart to do so. In addition I have gotten some unusual or unexpected error messages in the event log and some quite unexpected lock ups. This of course could quite easily be due to the fact this is still a Beta product.

Despite the new problems noted above on my system in Beta 2, I am still enjoying using it and find it harder and harder to go back to NT 3.51. I am now using NT 3.51 at work and boy do I miss some of the features of the Windows 95 interface as well as the enhanced diagnostic tools etc. There are however some aspects of NT that I do find lacking and do not believe will be improved on with the release of NT 4.0.

One area that puzzles me (and may be quite different by the time of final release) is the performance of NT 4.0 as compared to NT 3.51. I have gotten the impression, and maybe this is a faulty impression, that NT 4.0 was to improve on the overall performance of NT. It is supposed to require less hardware resources and improve on video and other areas. So far I have not been able to see any of these performance improvements on my system. I do have plenty of RAM (64MB) so that is a tough one to measure. But overall the performance is not faster than NT 3.51 and for some things it is

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noticeably slower. I believe some of this is due to the new interface but I had hoped most of the slowness due to the new interface would be made up elsewhere. But maybe not…

I still find the variety of hardware supported and the abilities of the drivers in supported hardware to be lacking compared to Windows 95. As an example, the HCL (Hardware Compatibility List), while getting longer and longer, still lists only a handful of HP scanners as being supported in NT. And HP claims they do not directly support NT for their scanners. Even supported hardware can come with drivers that are far more limited than their Windows 95 cousins. An example is my HP 1200C printer. This printer is supported in NT and has been for some time. But I cannot print with the same quality as I can in Windows 95 because there is no way to select to have the printer print in high quality mode (printer can do draft, normal or high quality). And similarly to the scanner situation, HP does not write drivers for this printer for NT themselves. The list of supported sound cards is still woefully small. The list of supported tape drives that are not 4mm DAT drives is also very limited. And while I do see evidence that more manufacturers are providing direct NT support themselves, it is still a relatively small number overall.

NT 4.0 will not have Plug n Play (PnP) or power management. I believe this will harm the acceptance of NT in the market place. I see more and more problems cropping up due to PnP hardware that won't install/work in NT, even if it should work with drivers that come in NT. I also see that some manufacturers are tending to only release PnP hardware, which will limit end users in what they can purchase for use with NT. I am fortunate in that I have no specific PnP hardware now (other than PCI cards which are considered PnP), but expect future purchases of certain types of hardware will bring me face to face with this issue. I also see increasing interest in power management and NT cannot provide it. Once again this is a draw

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back to users who are considering NT but also desire to have the ability to use power management.

Linda Rosenbaum lives and works in a suburb of New York City. She is an assistant controller at the World Headquarters for a large global manufacturing company. She has two young children and a husband whose full time job is to take care of the kids. When not working, Linda can be found on a variety of online services and the Internet reading and writing about her experiences with NT, networking, and multimedia. She maintains a home network of four systems using a combination of NT and Windows 95. Linda can be reached via Email at either lindar@cyburban.com or 71154.2622@compuserve.com.

Addresses_I/Os_IRQs_ and NT v4 AdministrativeTools!
Copyright 1996 by Lois Laulicht

Notwithstanding my long standing love affair with operating systems, I'm an NT newbie. Some three years ago we had NT Workstation 3.1 on our system, but that doesn't really count! Back then, I thought of NT as a closed operating system where tinkering with its innards was best left to developers and systems programmers. When we finally wangled an extra copy for the editorial offices, after the needs of the beta team were satisfied, I installed the Server software onto my homebrew Pentium. The installation was interesting because of a unique hardware setup here, but, in fact, quite straight forward. There were no hardware incompatibilities or software glitches and as I've explored and begun to learn the operating system, I find myself surprised. Never did I expect the transition from '95 to NT 4 Beta2 to be this easy.

Some of us have discussed issues of comfort zone or psychological ease as it relates to adjustments to technological changes reflected in new computer software. NT 3.1 looked like Windows 3.1 but was intimidating to an unsophisticated network user. When '95 was delivered, although richer in options than Win 3.11, some were uncomfortable with its unfamiliar interface. The heavy use of the right mouse button took a bit of remembering at first, but has since become an indispensable tool. The first encounter with NT v4.0 was like running

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into and catching up with an old friend who has changed and matured but in some basic ways much the same with many familiar and comforting characteristics.

In any case, the first priority was to find ones way around the system. I had installed version 3.51 for tutorial purposes and setting up a new motherboard. Familiarity with the Windows '95 interface made the transition seem easier but my friend Bill Blomgren knows better. He coddled me through a cable defect and, after the beta arrived, steered me toward the Administrative tools. He did it perfectly by letting me help myself.

One of the best things about Windows 3.11 was that we had to learn to write a pif file, edit the system and win.ini and fine tune the auto-exec and config files. As this relates to Windows '95, our very own Kent Bentkowski understood the need for committed Windows users to fine tune their own systems. Kent produced a registry FAQ the very day that Microsoft delivered Windows '95. Linda Rosenbaum said in last month's column that it (NT 4) looks like '95 but under the shared skin or interface, NT was still the same solid system she has learned to respect and depend upon. NT 4 now has the same slick system tools graphically displayed and available in Windows 95. It's simply a matter of finding their new location!

Our network has become a necessary tool for our very young maga-zine. The power of the version 4 system, in my view, is the administra-tive tool bag and network management utilities.

I'm used to getting my hands dirty under the PC hood and have scars on my knuckles to prove it. After a successful installation of a

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garmungous hard drive, the network died. I won't bore you with the intellectual heaving and hauling and am ashamed to admit that I didn't use these beautiful tools earlier, - I was too busy sobbing! In fact I erased the indicting Event Log before I decided I wanted to use the results here. It took a real problem to integrate understanding of how to use the tools. Event Log, a component of the Administrative Tools, pinpointed the problem and logically led to its solution.
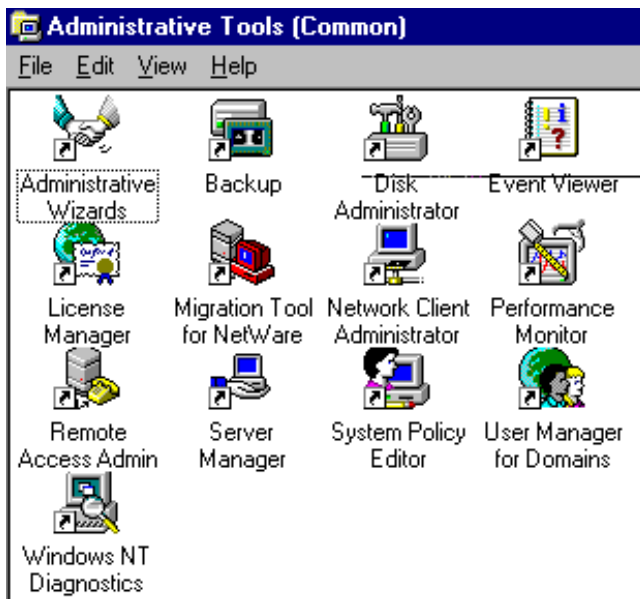
This is what the Administrative tools window looks like. I knew the Event Log would mark with a red icon system initialization errors.

By clicking on Event Viewer and then the item Details, the log could be viewed. The color coded items tell it all! Red is an alert! There's an error - A major problem.

Yellow is the warning icon while blue means that all is well...at least this time!

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The original log file had three red icons showing the first time I looked at it. They covered three items (I'm para-phrasing) the network card is not found, two devices are configured for the the same address while the third dealt with the inability of the system to load the proper software primarily because the first two items made it impossible to connect to the network.
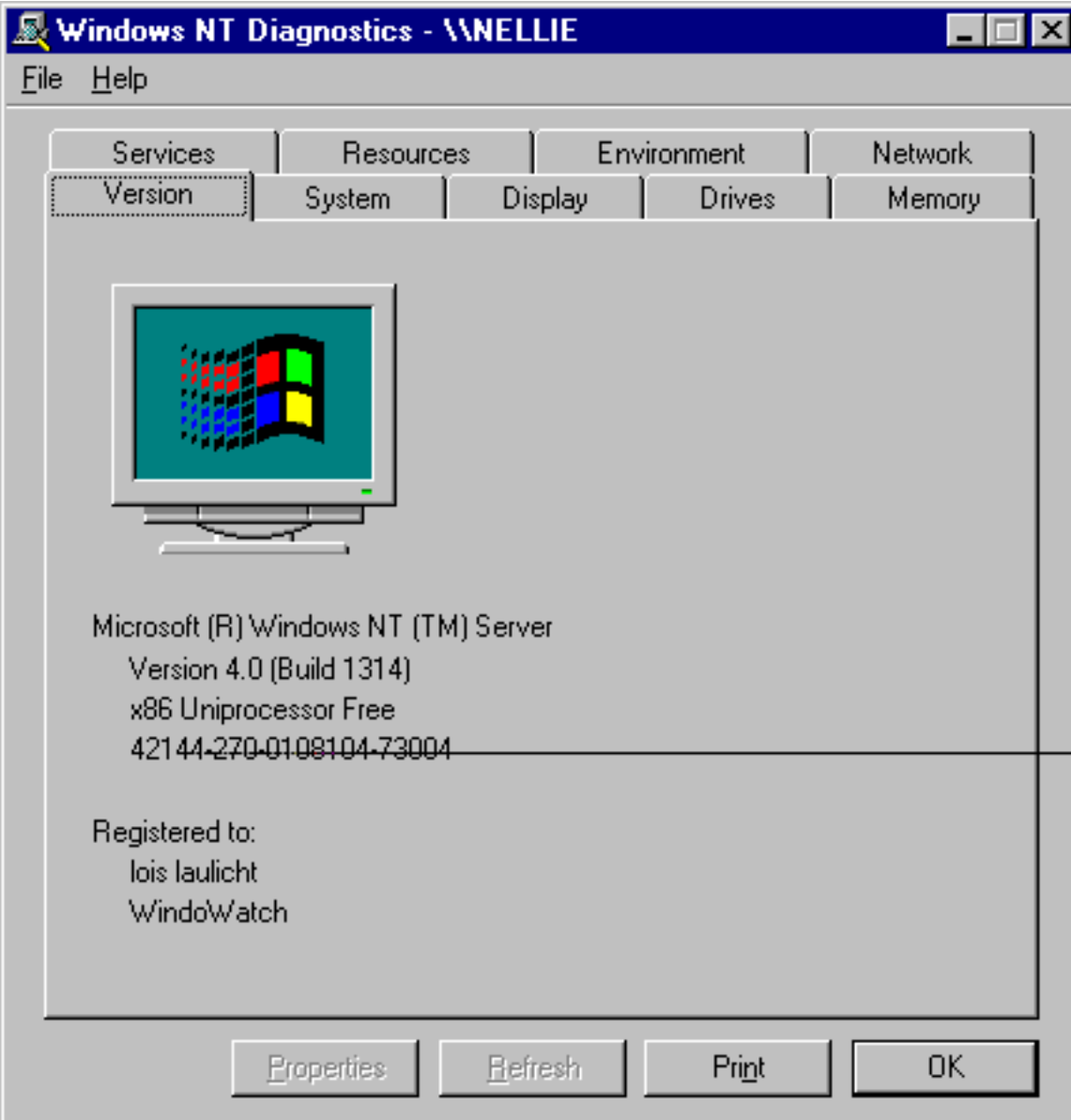
Date	Time	Source	Category	Event	User	Computer
6/17/96	11:58:54 AM	Srv	None	2013	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	11:53:40 AM	EventLog	None	6005	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	11:52:07 AM	BROWSER	None	8033	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:49:19 AM	Rdr	None	3012	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:42:30 AM	Srv	None	2013	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:37:19 AM	EventLog	None	6005	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:33:10 AM	BROWSER	None	8033	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:33:09 AM	Rdr	None	3012	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:33:09 AM	Rdr	None	3012	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:29:24 AM	EventLog	None	6005	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:26:49 AM	BROWSER	None	8033	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:26:28 AM	Rdr	None	3012	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	8:25:25 AM	EventLog	None	6005	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	7:56:47 AM	Rdr	None	3012	N/A	NELLIE
6/17/96	7:56:46 AM	Rdr	None	3012	N/A	NELLIE

Event Viewer - System Log on \\NELLIE

Log   View   Options   Help

The next graphic will show the details of this event log from Nellie, my NT 4 Beta 2 server. (Nellie was a horse I knew pretty well, - loyal, true and reliable...and stubbornly dependable)

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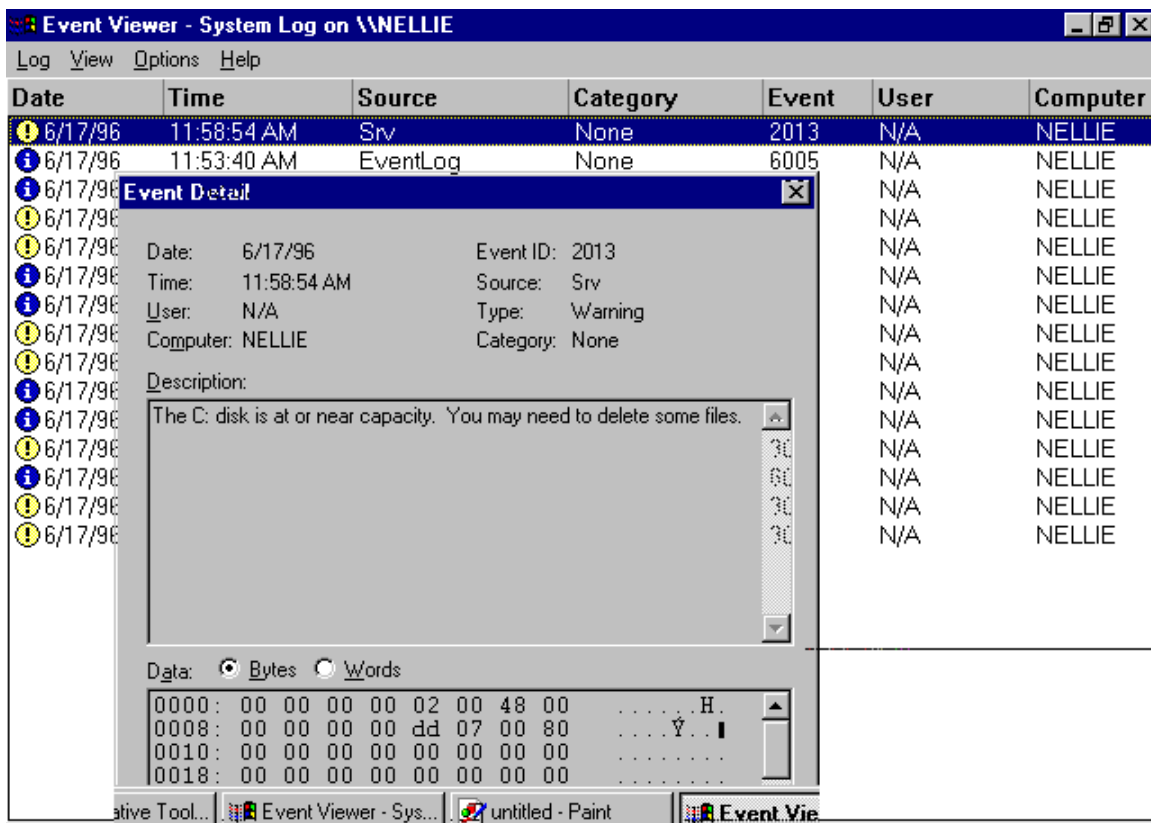
I am being warned that C: disk is near capacity and I might delete some files.

The next step was to take the error messages from the Event Log and translate them into a working solution. Look at the Administrative Tool Bag in figure 1. At the left bottom corner, one sees Windows NT Diagnostics. When clicked on, it looks like this:

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Windows NT Diagnostics - \\NELLIE

File   Help

Services	Resources	Environment	Network
Version	System	Display	Drives	Memory

Microsoft (R) Windows NT (TM) Server

Version 4.0 (Build 1314)

x86 Uniprocessor Free

42144-270-0108104-73004

Registered to:

lois laulicht

WindoWatch

Properties   Refresh   Print   OK

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Windows NT Diagnostics - \\NELLIE

File   Help

| Version | System | Display | Drives | Memory |
| Services | Resources | | Environment | Network |

Include HAL resources ☐

Address	Device	Bus	Type
0060 - 0060	i8042prt	0	Isa
0064 - 0064	i8042prt	0	Isa
01F0 - 01F7	Atdisk	0	Isa
02F8 - 02FE	Serial	0	Isa
0320 - 033F	NE2000	0	Isa
0378 - 037A	Parport	0	Isa
03B0 - 03BB	cirrus	0	Pci
03C0 - 03DF	cirrus	0	Pci
03F0 - 03F5	Floppy	0	Isa
03F6 - 03F6	Atdisk	0	Isa
03F7 - 03F7	Floppy	0	Isa
03F8 - 03FE	Sermouse	0	Isa

[IRQ] [I/O Port] [DMA] [Memory] [Devices]

[Properties] [Refresh] [Print] [OK]

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There will be other articles which will deal with the various options available. This time we're going to look at __Resource__ in the above screen capture. The Resource tab is on top to show that it is the one in use. What we see on the captured screen are the addresses for each of the devices installed in Nellie.

I draw your attention to the device labeled NE2000 and its address of 0320-033F as well as the device labeled Atdisk with an address of 03F6-03F6.

Without getting into a technical discussion of device addresses, suffice to say that the original installation of the NE2000 (the network card) was set for IRQ 5 I/O 0360h-03?? . This original configuration turned out to overlap the address of the newly installed hard drive. Had I been faster to discern that the network had disconnected as a result of the hard drive installation, the relatedness of the two events would have cued me to the cause more quickly. But, I had been writing almost exclusively that day and in truth, didn't even notice that the network was not operational until the following morning!

My two mistakes were (1) not checking the Event Log and the NT Diagnostic Resources and (2) erasing the actual log file for comparison purposes.

Given the lack of conceptual understanding of IRQ selection and address placement, the NT diagnostics in conjunction with the Event Log make repairing conflicts much less painful. If and when, Plug 'n Play is included in the NT bag of goodies, the pain will be reduced even more.

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Remember the days of DOS when most of us had a directory, usually on C: called C:\Utils with many layers or sub-directories describing our favorite system tools. With the glaring exception of a defragger and a hard drive trouble shooter like the Norton Disk Doctor, for non-programmers, at least, these utilities have finally become redundant and can be dumped . What Microsoft began in the System Properties Box of Windows 95 has been fine tuned and expanded in NT and now includes understandable and useful information about the entire network.

This little exercise is useful because it translates what each of us already know about Windows into what we must integrate into understanding this new-to-most-of-us operating system! Nellie's sole purpose in life is to act as a server. She sits unobtrusively in a corner as the work horse of our network usually with her plain vanilla monitor turned off. A new PCI sound card with activated alarms will be the next project. Additional new hardware and the installation of existing holdings, a flatbed scanner and modem, will bring with it new problems and opportunities for more hands on experience with NT's Administrative Tools.

Lois Laulicht is the Editor of *WindoWatch*.

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Alice Plays the Piano
Copyright 1996 by Peter Neuendorffer

Since Peter is taking the month off, this snippet is about Alice's attempt to instruct the computer with a musical keyboard. Alice has decided that she can use a Midi keyboard to write a program. The overall structure will be set by the chord pattern. The data will be the melody. The housekeeping routines will be tape loops. She feels that she can weave a program from these elements. The way the melody weaves through the chord pattern will specify the instructions. Repetitions will indicate processing loops, and dual-tonality will indicate branching, where variations on a theme will show the various if possibilities.

Her first program will be a set of recipes for pizza. She will specify the ingredients by ornamentations and trills on the melody. The general description of how to make a pizza will be in the introductory passage, and she will change keys to indicate the temperature of the oven; the tempo will indicate the ways to combine ingredients, and the length of the expostulation -noodling around on the theme - will indicate spices. Serving instructions will be contained in the pieces Coda.

I told her she is quite mad, but Alice is proceeding with My Pizza 1.0 and expects to have the program ready by tonight. Incidentally, she says the program may be "played" on the speaker as a musical composition, although it's main function is to give Pizza recipes. She says all manner of tasks can be reduced to playing the keyboard, including accounts receivable, accounts payable, and accounts closed.

Neuendorffer is a Windows programmer and a regular WindoWatch contributor.

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Window Aspect: A Scripting Language
A Tutorial: Part Thirteen Ghost BBS v3.20
Copyright 1996 by *Gregg Hommel*

This month, we're going to look at the Procomm Plus for Windows 3.0 conversion of scripts, before returning to further discussions of the script language itself. For those of you who are planning to upgrade, or who have already done so, this discussion should have some import ance.

The conversion utility in PCP/Win 3.0 is not poor in and of itself. Indeed, it does a reasonable job of converting PCP/Win 2.xx scripts to the 3.0 format. However, it has a few drawbacks which you should consider before using the converted scripts. The biggest of these is the overhead.

When you allow the installation routines of PCP/Win 3.0 to convert your PCP/Win 2.xx script source files (WAS) to the 3.0 format, or use the conversion routines as a stand alone later, the first thing you might notice is that the size of your WAS files has increased somewhat. When you convert scripts, the utility adds several #includes , some add-itional code lines, and does a lot of commenting out of old code, and replacing it with new code. All of this is coupled with notes explaining why the changes were made. This is fine, except

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that I have found that in many cases the changes made in the conversion are not necessary!

Additionally, the #includes referred to above, can, and often do, add a considerable amount to the compiled size of your scripts. As example, one such #include is for a file which adds translation of PCP/Win 2.xx menu items into PCP/Win 3.0 menus. However, if you do not make calls to the PCP/Win menu structure in your script, there is no need to include such a translation. However, the conversion utility includes it automatically during the conversion.

Some of the added code is also generally unnecessary. For almost every standard dialog box you have in your script (SDLG_____ code), the conversion will bracket the command line for that standard dialog with a WHEN SUSPEND before it, and a WHEN RESUME after it. I suppose, technically, this is the correct action to take, however, I have rarely found a problem with WHEN's firing when a standard dialog is on the screen. My code almost never uses one of those if any WHEN commands are active, and I suspect that this is tue in the majority of scripts.

Additionally, the conversion utility adds a function call in standard DIALOGBOX commands, which the notes in the converted file state is necessary in order to maintain compatibility with the functioning of the DIALOGBOX command in PCP/Win 2.xx. Precisely how, or why, it does this is not explained, however, that is what the notes to the changes say.

In both of the above cases, it is my opinion that such code differences are unnecessary. I have removed these changes in all of the scripts

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that I have converted from PCP/Win 2.xx to 3.0, including PCB Freedom, currently in beta, but not yet GHOST BBS. It is so large that it is taking more time to convert successfully. In any case, I have yet to discover any difference between running the 2.xx version of the script, and the 3.0 version.

And removing the unnecessary #includes and code that I feel is redundant, has reduced the size of the compiled WAX files from any-where from 15 to 25%!

Perhaps the better choice than using the PCP/Win 3.0 conversion utility on your PCP/Win 2.xx source code scripts is to simply copy the 2.xx source code over to your PCP/Win 3.0 \PROWIN3\ASPECT directory, and attempt to compile them. Not only does this help to eliminate unnecessary overhead, it also helps teach you precisely what changes to the language have been made in 3.0, by showing you where you have to change your code.

When you compile your old source, you can expect to see errors. Some simple login scripts may compile without any changes, depending upon how much code is involved, and how complicated the action you are attempting to accomplish. However, a more complex script than a simple login is likely to show errors during the compile.

I have found that it is often easier to simply let this happen, and take note of (or save) the error listing produced, and use that to modify, where necessary (and only where necessary) your original code. But if you follow this procedure, please remember that the compiler default settings shows only a limited number of the actual errors which are encountered, before it shuts down. Take the time, when modifying your souce code, to do a search for other instances in that source code,

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for the same form of command or statment. If you correct all of the instances in your source when the first error appears, you can avoid having that error re-appear and slow down or stop the compile.

Using this technique, and setting my PCP/Win 3.0 compiler to show twenty-five errors each time, before it halts, I was able to convert most scripts within a few attempts at compiling. PCB Freedom having about 1,250 lines of fairly complicated coding, took, if memory serves, either five or six passes before it compiled fully. Admittedly, there are one or two areas in the beta which still require work to fix, but they don't affect the basic operations of Freedom. A quick glance at the help files while compiling, were of no help to determine why these errors occured. But they too will be shortly repaired given a little time to study the help file documentation. Oh, how I miss that trusty old hard copy manual for Wasp, which I could take anywhere with me to study, whenever I had the time. I would puzzle out what the manual was trying to say. Remember, this is Procomm Plus for Windows we are talking about, and we all know what their document-ation can be like.

The compiled WAX for PCB Freedom 2.30 for PCP/Win 3.0 is almost the same size as the same WAX file under PCP/Win 2.xx, basically because it is little different than that under PCP/Win 2.xx, without all those #include files added along with code changes made but not needed. It seems to me, that is how it should be. There are no new features in this version, so the compiled WAX files should be about the same size. Using the PCP/Win 3.0 conversion utility, I would not have been able to make this same claim.

OK, enough of that for now. I need your help with a problem. Back two columns ago, we finished our discussion of the coding techniques

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used to get our dear old friend, George (you do remember him, don't you ?) past a simple basic log on to a BBS via a script, and into more detailed functionality while online, but automated through scripting.

The problem?? I'm not sure where to go from here! There hasn't been a lot of feedback from this column, other than the single time it hasn't appeared. As a result, I am not sure where you, the reader, want to go with this. There are countless possibilities of further things to discuss in Wasp (file management, functions and sub-procedures, and so many more), but I don't know where to go from here.

Please, help me out! Drop me a line at gregghom@ionline.net, and let me know what you want to seen in my column. Do you have a thorny coding problem you would like to see discussed? Maybe you have some working code, but think it could be improved, made more efficient, or just be more elegant. Whatever it is (even if it is to tell me to go away and don't come back), please help me out by letting me know where to go from here.

I guess that's it for this month... here's hoping that, before next month's column, we have something more interesting to discuss than my problems with converting GHOST BBS from PCP/Win 2.xx to PCP/Win 3.0. You really don't want me to start THAT discussion, do you?

Gregg Hommel is a much respected Aspect script writer and programmer. He is well known on the various nets hosting any number of conferences. He is applying his considerable programming talents to the construct of his own homepage and ours. Gregg sits on our Editorial Board and is a regular WindoWatch contributor. Gregg can be reached at gregghom@ophelia.waterloo.net.

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Always In STYLES
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My last article on Microsoft Word 7 for Windows 95 talked about handy keyboard shortcuts to help you become more efficient in your day to day use of Winword. This time I want to introduce you to the power and flexibility of styles.

Before you cringe or battle the urge to duck under your desk, be aware that, whether you know it or not, you already use styles. Each time you type a memo or a letter, you are using a paragraph style called Normal in conjunction with a character style called the Default Paragraph Font. If you don't believe me, check out the style drop-down list box on your formatting toolbar. These are the two types of styles you can use in Winword: character and paragraph. In Winword 7, paragraph style names are preceded by the paragraph mark and character styles are preceded by an underlined letter 'a.' (Note: In Winword 6, paragraph styles are set in bold text, whereas character styles are set in normal text.)

Powerful Paragraphs

Paragraph styles are by far the most common and powerful. Yet character styles have their place. In the Word-Wise Web Writer, my Winword HTML template, I use character styles to separate the three different types of text: HTML code, text signifying links and regular

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text. Since all three often appear on the same line, character styles were the way to go. On the other hand, in ScreenPro, my Winword screenplay template, I needed many different types of paragraph styles. The difference between the two templates is this: Web Writer is driven by macros and dynamic dialog boxes; ScreenPro is driven by styles, paragraph styles to be more precise. And that's why I thought it would be practical to use ScreenPro as the example to convey the power of styles.

First, let's look at some of the formatting features you can control with paragraph styles. Notice especially the last item.

- Font (name, point size, capitalization, and other features)
- alignment of text
- line spacing, both before and after
- what style the current style is based on
- indentation: right and left (along with hanging indents, etc.)
- text flow (i.e., keep together, keep with next, page break before)
- what style follows the current style

Now, a little screenplay background. If you've ever seen a professionally formatted screenplay, or even a reproduction of one in a book, you probably noticed there's a whole lot of formatting going on. Each element on the screenplay page has a precise name and location, from the position of the title and author credit on the title page to that of THE END on the last page. So much so, that the aspiring screenwriter may feel too intimidated by the format structure

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to ever get the story down on the page. With the power of Word's styles, all the writer needs to be concerned with is telling the story.

Generally, a screenplay's *styles* flow in the order of: scene heading (slug line), action, character name, dialogue followed by some more action. What that means is that you set the scene location, describe some action taking place, introduce a character who speaks and performs some more action. Obviously this isn't always the flow, but it's a good shell.

I named the scene headings (slug lines) styles to match Winword's built in Heading style names so I could take advantage of the built-in outline features and collapse the full screenplay down into scene level summaries. It's important to realize that you can modify any built in styles to suit your needs. (In the screenplay template, the normal font is Courier New, as required by screenplay formatting.) If you want to retain the original style's characteristics, then you do all this redefining in a template. Elsewhere the Heading styles act normally. The *scene heading* is defined as follows: all caps, space before 24 points (triple spacing), and keep with next (so the scene heading isn't split across a page break from the *action* that follows). Now here's the neat part, after you press ENTER to end the scene heading paragraph, the next style automatically becomes the *action* style, with all its formatting now in effect.

Action is defined as having 12 point spacing before (double spacing), with lines of the paragraph kept together, and the style following is *character*. This is where styles kick into high gear. *Character* is defined as all caps, 12 point spacing before, indented 2.7" from the left margin and 1" from the right, with a keep with next instruction (again, you

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don't want a character name split from the *dialogue* he or she speaks, which is, not coincidentally, the style following *character*.)

Since *dialogue* spawns *action* which spawns *character* which spawns *dialogue*, the screenplay writer could find herself trapped in a never ending loop. But as I stated above, this is the general flow. Since the TAB key is superfluous with such meticulously detailed styles, I programmed the TAB key to cycle among next-reasonable-style-following in a particular pattern. This means that if *dialogue* dumps the writer back into *action* when what she really want is another *character* to say something in response, she just hits the TAB key in that action paragraph and it instantly changes into a *character* styled paragraph. Similarly, if she wants to describe *how* a *character* says the *dialogue* that follows (e.g., sarcastically, shouting, etc.), the TAB key will convert the current dialogue style into the parenthetical style (so called, because the instruction is written in parentheses), which is then followed by the dialogue style. I also provided style toolbar buttons and, of course, the style dropdown list box is always available. The important point to glean from all this is that the style-following feature can be a powerful tool, removing most if not all style and formatting headaches. If you're writing a heavily formatted document with well-defined styles, it should never be necessary to press ENTER to put extra spacing between the different styles of paragraphs. It should be built-in.

(Note: if you want to examine the nuts and bolts style construction of ScreenPro, also known as SCRNPRO, it is available for download from my web page: http://members.aol.com/jackwpass/aspire.html)

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Creating a Style

Now that you've seen a practical example of what paragraph styles can do, let's get down in the trenches and create a style. On the FORMAT menu, select Style...
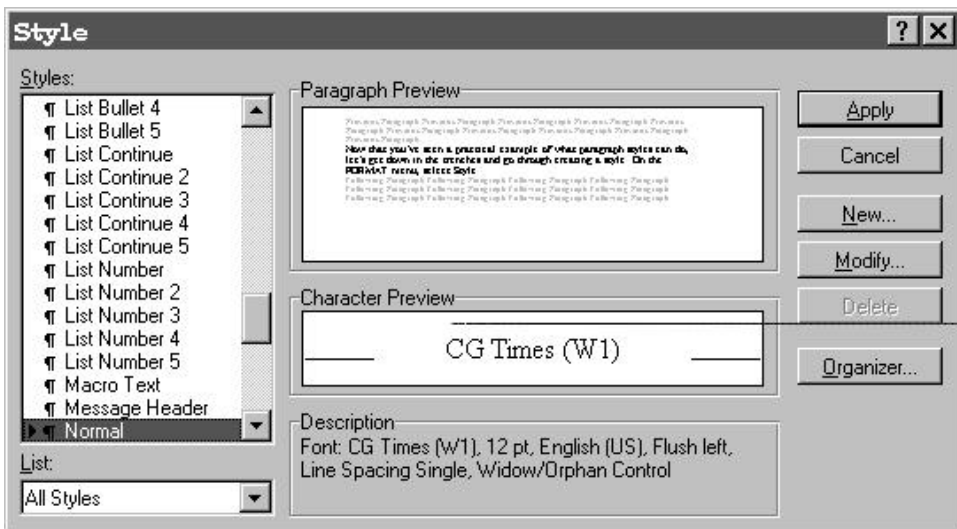
You see a list of styles based upon what you select in the List drop-down list box. You can specify all styles, styles in use, user-defined styles (that means yours), or styles in a template you may have loaded. I find that when I'm creating styles for a template, it helps to eliminate the clutter and just see the styles in the template listed. To the right of the style list is a paragraph and a character preview of the style. Below that, a description of just what makes up the style selected in the list to the left, building blocks that you assemble. Unless

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**you are modifying (tweaking) a style you created or one of the built-in styles, you will probably select New... at this point.**

Here is where you name your style and decide whether it is a character or paragraph style, select what style it is based on and what style follows (for paragraph styles only); you will also see the description, which grows as you build upon it; add a shortcut key to automatically invoke the style, and indicate whether it should be saved to the current template.

When you select the Format key, you will be able to modify font, paragraph, tab, border, language, frame and numbering attributes. I'll concentrate on the first two: fonts and paragraph. With Font, you

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can select the typeface, all capitals, italics, etc. For example, suppose you wanted to design a style for quotations from books for a research paper. You might name the paragraph style *quote*, under font you might use a different typeface and set it all in italics. Under paragraph, you have many more options.
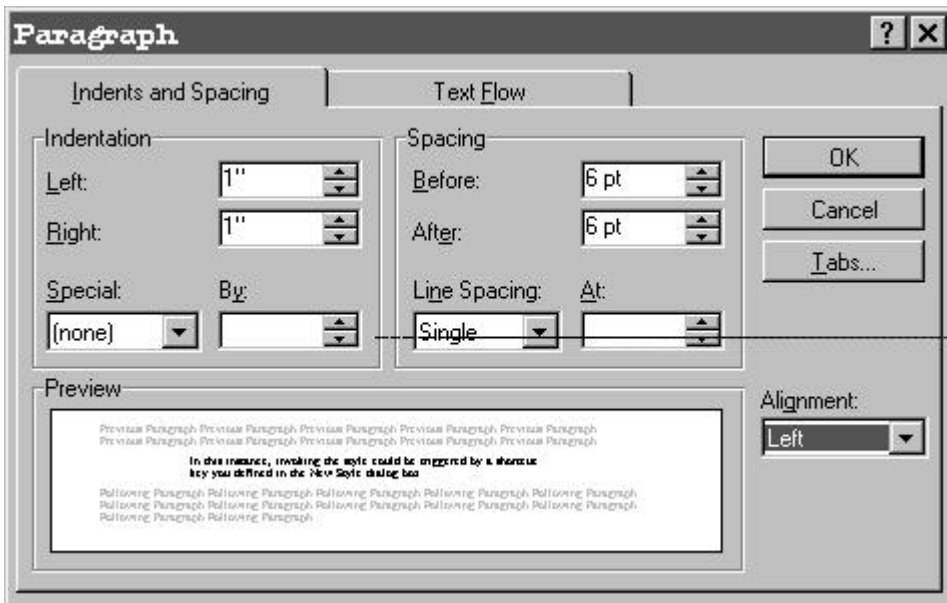
First, with Indents and Spacing, you could set the left and right indents to one inch each. I selected 6 point spacing before and after to give the quote a little breathing room. It will be single spaced with left alignment. (As you make these selections, the preview box dynamically alters sample text to reflect your changes.) Under text flow, I selected keep together, which prevents the quote from being split between pages. At the New Style screen, I set the style based on

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and the style following to normal, since it is unlikely that a quote would follow a quote.

In this instance, invoking the style could be triggered by a shortcut key you defined in the New Style dialog box, for example ALT+CTRL+Q, to keep it mnemonic. You could also select *quote* from the style dropdown list box on the formatting toolbar.

Dynamic Styles

Styles are dynamic so that if you change the characteristics of a style, any paragraph in your current document using that style will change appropriately. If you decide that you don't like that Bodoni font you selected for your quotes, you can go back and modify it. All the quote paragraphs in your document will change to the new font. This demonstrates how styles are much more powerful than manually formatting every quote in your document. If you later decided you didn't like the font, you would have to locate each quote and manually change the style, or use the format painter at each instance. With a style change, you never have to know *where* the quote paragraphs are. Word will find all of them and change all of them for you, automatically. Big dividends.

Style Inheritance

Styles inherit characteristics of the styles they are based on and those style inherit the characteristics of the styles they were based upon and so on and so on. Any common characteristics flow through from one to the next. If I decide that I want my normal font to be Century Schoolbook instead of Times New Roman. I change *normal* and every

style based on normal now inherits Century Schoolbook. The exception to this rule is if you specifically changed a style's font. It will still retain the change, since that one attribute is *not* based on *normal*.

Style Follow Through

If you use the style following feature, one note to keep in mind: you will need to create your styles in reverse order. If Style A is followed by Style B which is then followed by Style C, you need to create them from C to B to A. That means that when you define A and say that if is followed by B, B has to already be defined and available for selection. Of course, you could go back and modify each style-following entry, but if you approach them in reverse order you can save yourself some time.

Some Style Tips

When you name a style, if you follow the name with a comma and an abbreviation, you can use that abbreviation to select the style. For example, when we created the quote style, we could have named it as: quote, qt. The *qt* becomes the abbreviation for the style. Using the shortcut key to select a style, CTRL+SHIFT+S followed by the letters *qt* and pressing ENTER, turns the current paragraph into the quote style.

In Normal and Outline View, you can have your styles listed on the left side of your screen by selecting TOOLS Options View and increasing the style width to .6 or .7, which makes the style name area wide enough to see without cramping too much of your document screen. You can experiment with the width based upon your screen

resolution to find the best trade off. Note: this option will not appear on the View tab if you are currently in Page Layout View.

Investment in Styles

Styles take a little planning and a little experimentation, but once you take a little time to see how the various options work, and make the short term investment in defining your styles, I'm sure you'll receive a big return on that investment.

Jack Passarella is a Word guru and functions as the Host of the Ilink Word conference. He is employed by a printing company and is the author of several shareware programs.

(Continued from Editorial Page)

To describe the Internet as just noise or just smut or just anarchy is to describe the greater society by exactly the same measure. Not less or more, but exactly the same. It's in the same category as ranting about one's local red light district, or the language of teenagers or the whole-sale deceit of the Congress. Rhetoric is not going to change any of these realities, so why bother? If the maladies of each are close to being the same, what is it that makes the Internet such an inviting target and what is this who-ha-ha really about?

There is no easy way to learn the tasks which can put outsiders off the net onto the net. Internetters are receptacles of secret; hard-to-learn; nerdy; technical; jargon-filled fonts of specialized knowledge. They are to be respected, feared, envied, emulated, diminished and despised. But most of all they/we are needed , all of us, to become guides to the unitiated.

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Unfortunately Internetter have become jaded,sophisticated or blasé. The old timers no longer rush to every well touted web site. The lemming mentality of what's in and what's hot, - is not! We, with our too short memories, giggle a bit at the newbies who rise to the bait and follow like sheep.

This is as much a part of the phenomena that is the Internet than anything already said. Indeed, the claim that the Internet is going to generate mega bucks is as much suspect as are the guesstimates of the numbers of people who regularly use the Internet. The claim that a large segment of the population will engage in all sorts of mundane tasks on the Internet over the next ten years is of course unproved but quite likely.

Among other things, the Internet does mundane very well!

It seems to me that it is arrogant and presumptuous for those who know the Internet only from what they have read or from what others have said mouth off about this new phenomena. Unfortunately, I see no end to the carping that we should mend our ways.

Finally getting involved with computers is challenging and very rewarding. Getting involved with the Internet is both of those things plus aggravating and frustrating. But even more important is that we've all been there. What did we do to increase our knowledge, sophistication and comfort level?   What!

Join a user group or find a BBS that subscribes to one of the BBS networks like Ilink, Fido or RIME. It is here where good people congregate and are generous with their time and knowledge. They will

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help diminish the pain of learning this foreign language with its rigidly picky syntax. The risk is minimal and the rewards are great!

In my physical world in the Appalachian sticks, we have a phrase that minimizes social distance and puts the question where it belongs. Stop belly-aching and "Come on down! "

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DISCOVERING ACCESS V7.0
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I conceive the Microsoft Office suite as a sort of ladder, with the most-general program, Word, at the top, and the most-specialized, Power-point at the bottom. Having gotten through Word and Excel, we are now at the third, next to lowest, rung. I might also add that one's sense of security decreases as one goes lower on the ladder, in inverse ratio to one's fear factor.

At the third rung, the scariness level rises to a triple-forte crescendo! After all, we are now in the murky region of *database management* , a term designed to strike terror in the hearts of the uninitiated. Once the realm of only true bit-heads, database management retains its mysterious aura even in today's climate of user-friendly applications. Records, fields, primary keys, relationships ... it's enough to send the bravest running for cover! To help allay our fears, let's look at what's available in the world of documentation.

With the '95 Office suite, Microsoft has tried a new, for them at least, documentation technique. Rather than the old give 'em a haystack and let them search method, in which every conceivable factoid related to the program was included. The writing team for Office 95 winnows the information down to only what a typical user needs to know, taking a task-oriented approach. Of course, this means you may or may not fit into the profile of typical user as they define it.

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Even so, you have to give them credit for trying and for the most part succeeding. The result is a manual that is somewhat less overwhelming in bulk (though still over 600 pages, including index) and much more integrated. The pages are easy on the eyes with plenty of white space at the margins. The information is not *that* hard to find, especially if you refer to the usually adequate index. One niggling criticism: why, oh why must they denigrate America's only original art form by using the phrase "jazz up" on page 153?

While I'm on the topic of documentation, I should give credit to another source of information I've been using: *Microsoft Office 95 Introductory Concepts and Techniques*, by Shelly, Cashman and Vermaat (Boyd & Fraser). This publication picks up where the Microsoft manual leaves off, and more than expands upon the manual. The book is like having a Wizard at your side leading you step by step through each process, with detailed illustrations and ample callouts to help the most timid find their way. A discussion of the documentation after market is a topic for another time, but the book produced by Shelly, Cashman, Vermaat is an outstanding example of what can be done when writers, editors, and production staff are not shackled to a software release schedule.

What about Access 7, the product? I suppose I should say *something* about it at some point in this article. Thankfully, Microsoft has had the good sense or perhaps otherwise occupied, for doing other than, leaving a good thing alone. For those of us who've used the 2.0 version, there's great comfort in seeing many of the same features carried over to 7.0. For the neophyte, with no experience using a database manager, the availability of the Wizards is very welcome, although in some cases, as Shelly et al. point out, if you have a reasonable notion about what you want to do, you can sometimes do it more quickly by avoiding the Wizard.

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Of course, there have to be *some* new bells and whistles to justify the leap from V2 to V7. As an aside, isn't it nice to be Microsoft, where you can blithely ignore the intervening digits? It reminds me of a friend's description of a boxing match that did not go well: "I gave him the old 1 - 10. He gave me 2 through 9." However, there are a number of nice touches, in addition to the usual Windows 95 features.

Like its Office cohorts, the 95 version of Access includes File menu options aimed at Email usage with *Send* and *Add Routing Slip* . Less generic are convenience elements like the New Record button on Forms, so you can tell Access to add a record by clicking the button. Also, you now have greater flexibility in switching among views (Design, Form, Datasheet) while you're working with a form (which means you can also find yourself more easily confused in the maze of multiple windows, a penalty incurred by increased flexibility).

Before retiring from my career at a major computer maker, I was, like so many other Dilbertians, subjected to a steady onslaught of catchy slogans, designed to motivate us to greater productivity and higher levels of quality. Management never seemed to appreciate how their motivational efforts produced only increased cynicism and hostility, but that's a topic best left to Scott Adams. In any case, "delighting the customer" was one that enjoyed a brief tenure before giving way to the next motto du jour. Therefore, it is with some astonishment that I report the new Access includes a feature that did exactly that for this customer: I was delighted to find that Autocorrect is included with Access 7!

Okay, so maybe this doesn't raise your pulse rate to the same dangerously high level as mine, but for anyone concerned with the preservation of the English language, Autocorrect is a boon. Programs that check spelling are okay, but leave too many gaps and opportunities

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for poor word choice. How many times have you seen *compliment* where *complement* was intended? In almost every case, you can avoid this, and similar howlers, by including these words in your list of Autocorrections.

Access 7 has made a few refinements in other areas as well, such as:

- including page numbering in reports that tells you not only what page you're looking at, but how many pages the report includes.
- In Queries, you can click the asterisk (*) character in the Field list to include all fields in the Query.
- The data type choices for fields have been expanded to include Balance and Insurance.

While I'm on the data type topic, I have to register a complaint about the index in the Microsoft manual: nowhere can I find an entry for "datatype," "data type," or "type, data." This seems too significant to be omitted. In the next update maybe?

One tip that I feel compelled to include (and for which I thank Shelly et al.) relates to duplications that show up in queries, usually to your great annoyance. When the criteria you specify in a query can produce duplicates in the output, you can prevent this by choosing Unique Values Only in the Queries Properties command.

Both novice and veteran will find much to like about the Win 95 version of Access. It's both easy to use and easy to learn. In short, easy to take!

Frank McGowan is a regular contrubutor to WindoWatch. He has been deep in the multi-facets of Office 95. This is part of that series! Frank is a computer consultant, a scientific writer and a teacher of computer science.

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PETER'S MANY THINGS V. 4
A Personal Information Manager Program by Peter Neuendorffer

Reviewed by Jerome Laulicht

Another shareware program worth trying is <u>Peter's Many Things v.4</u> - a Personal Information Manager program (PIM). Don't be misled by the somewhat unconventional program name chosen by Peter Neuendorffer, the developer. He is also original enough to have created the whimsical and computer maven, Alice, who keeps appearing on these *WindoWatch* pages. It is therefore, my expect- ation, to see sparks of originality in this program. I must wonder, however, if I'm going to find Alice flying across these pages when this article appears in print.

A note about this review. The fact that I am closely related to the magazine editor has had no effect on my evaluation of a program created by a regular contributor to WindoWatch. If anything, I have been even more strict invoking the rule that there is seldom any point to writing critically about a program that is mediocre or worse.

Peter has written an elegant program and has filled almost every imaginable gap, unless you are one of those fantasy users who keep demanding ever more features in a single effort.   I have not yet found anything I wanted to do with my information 'things' that is not poss- ible using Peter's set of commands and options. He has been thorough! THINGS is an example of a program still in the process of development while seeking an elusive perfection. This is true for almost any good program. He is trying to improve it not by adding

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more features but by making it easier to use, faster, and providing more options. Let me give an example of how I know this.   When I call him for some guidance, he provides it efficiently but wants to plunge into an issue which holds more importance for him—his key criticism of his program. To learn easily how to use it, he says, "you have to think like the program. I don't like that but I don't know what is best to do about it."

There are so many PIM programs and so much demand for them that I need to say just enough about it so you can decide whether to give this one a trial. This is not the complex and multiple purpose PIM like Organizer or AskSam, designed for group use on a network for organization of masses of documents and files. THINGS is a tiny program which bites off a chunk of the information barrage and helps you record it quickly and retrieve it as easily. You use it to organize scraps of information mostly created by you.   But first let me use most of what Peter says, even though it isn't much, about how you might use the program.

"THINGS is for you, should you find your scraps or even sheets of paper all over your desk from phone calls, to do lists, ideas, or whatever. This is far more than a ToDo program with an attached calendar. You can find any information item easily since THINGS offers you many ways of arranging and finding your information. It does this for you by *nudging* you to make some simple decisions as you add each entry. The one-line entries are arranged in a free form list which you shape according to your needs and arrangements that can be readily changed without mucking with the entries. You type a scrap or use cut and paste to select scraps of info from your own files or anyone else's files. It is easy to learn how to do this once you have

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converted the desired info into one liners. There are even commands so that you can treat all the lines you select from one file as a single unit."

When I had read these few comments, I started paying serious attention but I was skeptical. I tend to generate notes or pieces of info that I think are or will be important to me. I scribble notes almost haphazardly and so hurriedly that I often have difficulty deciphering what I wrote. A few minutes ago, I absently-mindedly taped a little scrap of paper to my desk to 'install' a new version of Xword program. My sources are varied and my intentions are always good –to type and file info that I can find it easily again. The results of this *system* vary wildly- no surprise. It looked as though this program might be an elegant solution. It is easy to learn and use once you get the hang of the approach. Then you really can find the relevant infor-mation quickly.

Peter says a bit more. "The main window displays THINGS in your list. The display changes according to the view or selection filter you choose.   You enter many things in any random order, and then choose the useful selections of these items to examine, - or find the item you need with one key word. The list can contain up to 800 items and you can have three of these lists."

Almost inevitably, there is a small catch to this procedure—Peter's main criticism.   It is unclear what the good alternatives might be to the 'thinking of Things' but there must be some. The alternatives are to write your own program, find another existing program, rely on your database program or continue to rely on a big desk and a fine memory. I did not find it too much of a burden to understand the

program structure—but then I am running out of desk room. It is unclear whether another way of thinking would be an improvement or just an alternative basis.

Let me describe the basic procedure you must use to record entries. This is a bare skeleton intended to show you that THINGS is not a big learning puzzle and additionally, to alert you to a few undocumented facts. The real challenge comes a bit later when you want to learn many of the more sophisticated techniques.

THINGS installs easily--unzip the file into a directory—and after you click it on, it comes up quickly, about five seconds on a reasonably fast machine. There are several things to deal with before you start.

Your first impression may be one of slight shock. Half the screen is blank, intended for display of your data entries. The top half is loaded with words and buttons—eight menus with between 1 and 8 commands, plus 12 command buttons plus a few descriptor words. This is almost as shocking as some of the big mainline programs.

I got used to this crowd but then Peter insisted I make things simpler. Choose the option 'hide task buttons (expert)', he says. This did not seem ethical, let alone sensible, but he tells the truth. Most of the commands happily disappear, and you have a hidden right button menu with many commands and a handful of pleasant little icons. Simply discipline your mind to ignore the word 'expert'.

Follow his recommendations and choose most of the 'data control' options to make things simpler—see the help file. You *must* choose the 'paste in reverse' option even though this is not made clear.

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When you bring up the program you will see two icons, not one. For now, ignore the one called 'Smallform file' until you know the basics.

First scan the first few help topics or the online manual and you will then be ready to go. This is not the most elegant and sophisticated help file but more on this later.

You can now start entering your information. Use the two lines or boxes at the top of the window for entries. The top line is for your 'scrap' of info. You *cannot* exceed the preordained limit of eighty characters so for now its terseness or another program. The second line is your topic assignment. Its simpler if you create several topics before entering data so that you can use a drop down list.

There are some slight complications! You must decide whether you want a date—automatically or manually entered. You can keep changing this in a second. Then decide whether you want to mark it as important, again, no big deal to change! Click the Add button and you will see the item appear in the big window.

 There is much more to this program but once you get this routine straight you can then do the basic things. You will be able to learn about the advanced features, commands and options from the help files.

You also get a calendar/scheduler, a rather standard extra in a PIM program.   It is a workable and good calendar program presenting no problems when learning to use it.

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Suggestions and Criticisms

I must note first a source of sorrow, but being serious I frame it as a somewhat unusual suggestion to a serious programmer. Without even thinking about it, I gradually realized I was looking for Alice to appear in his program. I know that programmers are supposed to have serious fun doing what they do but then most programmers are not au courant with Peter's friend Alice. Why doesn't Alice sponsor the program and tell us in no uncertain terms how she intends to use it and why we should want to try it. Why not a sketch of Alice, in full color, as a logo. And then there's Alice who uses her umbrella to fly—just one of her talents. Couldn't we have the chance to contemplate her grace when she flits across the screen, as we try to word that "Thing" intuitively while still heeding the stern discipline to stick to eighty characters per entry. Of what earthly use if not for this are those fancy animation tools which have become almost a standard part of programming tool packages. And then there are those well designed big dialog boxes Peter created which elegantly simplify the various tasks of using this new PIM. No animation here—just a few different portraits to brighten the screen and lighten the task. Gads, she even appears on his Home Page. Does she disapprove of Things?

It is too easy to make a simple but core error on any data entry. You *must* click the 'add' button for a new entry or it will be lost. You *must* click 'replace' when you edit an old entry or else no change is made. It proves a bit too easy to forget this final entry or editing step. Peter has to nudge people like me not to be careless and help guard me against error. He could use audio reminders or a dialog box with text or with a graphics of Alice wearing a T-shirt saying no-no! I think an elegant approach even though it increases program size, is to give us

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a choice between these suggestions or to allow us to shut off the re-minder when we become experts.

My main suggestion for improving Peter's program centers around the help provided for users, especially the way it is organized and presented. Whether we consider new users or the more experienced ones seeking guidance on a seldom used procedure, they can expect a minimum of frustration. Consider new users of a shareware program evaluating a program and deciding whether to buy it. They are un-likely to use or buy a program which is frustrating to learn.

These are the areas which need to be strengthened to make Things into a top notch shareware program which could more than hold its own if distributed through commercial channels.

The contents of the instructions are about as good as one finds in many commercial programs and better than many. His presentation is of about the same quality, for example, as the help provided for an excellent backup program which came with a fine backup tape drive sold by smallish company which is now a subsidiary of a major one. In both cases I sweated more than I think necessary to achieve the goal.

To further test that his help works,   I phoned him once for guidance on a few obscure items to save time. I then checked him out and found almost all the info on line but I had to dig it out painfully. All Peter needs to do is what I think of as the careful but tedious final draft to make it even more useful when he presents it in some of the ways suggested below.

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He has to cope with the fact that that good PIM programs like this one are not simple, even though inexperienced people often seem to expect almost magical results with little effort. He needs to help people get "up to speed" quickly with a few short tutorials which make you do things and give you hands on feedback with sensible reactions, not all-purpose error messages. The first would introduce new users to the basic procedures to enter and retrieve data. The second would cover the remaining commands and procedures which are not crucial to basic data entry. It is these features which move Things into the class of very nice and very useful programs. It is not a very simple program, except for the basics and the calendar. He also should test out his tutorial efforts with new users as a draft to be revised.

He should keep the manual and his current presentation of the help files because they allow one to get an overview of the program. Since in this program you can only learn by doing , making errors and getting feedback, he needs to use techniques which allow ready access to small segments of context sensitive help. They won't be one-liners but that's part of the complexity of information.

Perhaps there is a simple way to give us the option to have as much as three lines for some of our 'things'. There are papers on my desk having many words. There might also be the option which allows me to place discrete small sets of instructions in a narrow window on the screen whenever I need them. There are several tools available which make it easy for a programmer to do this and similar enhancements with Windows help files.

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THINGS has many commands and procedures and users need a way to quickly access terse information on any single command or on a related group of them. With that I could easily learn or recall what the 'blank' command deletes, what will be sure to happen if I use the 'insure' command, and what list is referred to in the 'empty list' command. Else the utility of infrequently used commands is limited.

We also need a small addition to the program file on Peter's Home Page and/or for those who register the program—the fairly common supplemental Readme.New.Txt file which tells us about the undocumented features in the program. There are some which are indeed useful. For example, the following important but tiny fact is probably there but I couldn't find it. When you exit the program it automatically saves all the changes and additions you made during that session. So do not be concerned if you notice there is no Save command in the File menu. If you are concerned, then click on the 'Insure' command which will save your work.

None of these suggestions are meant to be original. Rather I focused on some rather easily implemented ways to improve the Help found in the more complex shareware programs designed for Windows. They have been used successfully for complex programs, and program tools are available to organize and structure the help. The ideas are relatively simple to use when one uses major programming tools like Delphi and Visual Basic. None of them are substitutes for clearly written content, they make good instructions easier to use.

'Try it, you might need it and even like its way of thinking' is my one line, almost eighty character thing/entry/scrap or whatever.

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Hello, Alice.

Peter's Many Things v.4 is available for download at Peter's Home Page—http://channel1.com/users/petern. There is also a link on the *WindoWatch* Home Page. The registration fee is $20.
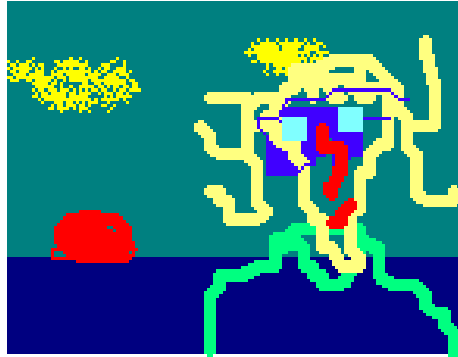
Jerry Laulicht is Professor Emeritus from the Department of Sociology at the University of Pittsburgh. He is the author of many scholarly articles and papers in the areas of Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies. He confesses to a long standing attachment to Alice.
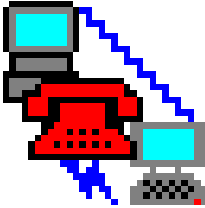
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Reflections of a ModemJunkie

Copyright 1996 by *Leonard Grossman*

I'm zooed....absolutely zooed. That's the only word for it --or is it zoned? I still have to give lip service to the priorities of my day job, so I was forced to limit my attendance at this year's Comdex/Windows World to one day.   But I am an experienced trade show junkie. I can handle this, I thought. Well, I'm absolutely zooed. I sneaked out today and crammed a week of booth hopping into six hours.

Then I got back to my office and found a brand new copy of PCWeek with a lead editorial "Trade Shows: Who needs them?" Since PCWeek's parent company owns Comdex, it's no surprise that they conclude we all do. But the question is a good one.

I arrived by packed shuttle bus just before 10:00 a.m., presented my preregistration and waited for security to release the impatient hordes. (I especially liked the guy with a walkie talkie or cell phone in each hand. . . He had a certain country panache as he allowed exhibitors to pass but sternly stopped any mere guest from entering their promised land. At last they relented and we descended upon the waiting exhibitors.

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Since the first bus stop was on the Windows World side of the street, I stopped there first. I figured I'd spend an hour and a half there maybe two -tops! I used my experience and began at a fairly leisurely pace. I don't have to visit every booth. I don't need that many ball point pens and my daughter has outgrown buttons and pins.

At first, I found the exhibitors and staff more knowledgeable than in the past. I actually found that some even knew something about their products and could answer questions. As usual, I found the side shows the most fascinating.

As a kid I always liked the side shows at the auto show. You know -- the aisle where they sell the wax stick that you rub on your car window so you can see through the fog . . . and those great knives that never need sharpening.

At computer shows, this is where you find the memory resellers, the off brand mother boards and security systems.. and a few genuinely interesting products. I found something called "Wordix 1.0, Your Personal Browser."

It takes great courage to try to sell a product labeled version 1.0. but there it was. And it looked fascinating. It appears to be a sophisticated text search engine with a number of excellent features. When I mentioned my beloved Magellan, the owner seemed curious. Several others had mentioned it to him this week but he had never seen it. After we talked for a while, I told him about this column, he agreed to give me an evaluation copy so I could review it.   That will have to wait until later this summer, after I clear off a few meg from the pawnshop special. But I felt like a real pro. It was going well.

But then I looked at my watch... it was already after 11:30 and I still had several aisles to go before I could cross the street and enter

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Comdex itself. I picked up my pace, scurried by the booths and only glanced in the direction of others. My early savoir faire was beginning to break down. When I talked to an exhibitor, I discovered I was tongue tied.. already sensory overload was hitting me.

On the way out I found a pizza stand, bought a large slice cheese and ate it crossing the tunnel/bridge to the other building of McCormick Place. At the other end there was a coke machine, only a dollar-- not counting the quarter which rolled under the machine. That was lunch and then off to the next set of exhibits.

Comdex itself was divided into two major sections on two floors. The first level focused on Multimedia and the Internet. Super bass sub-woofers pounded and vibrated, assaulting me from the moment I walked through the entrance. But here was the online stuff and Net-scape dominated. It was here the demonstrators grew a little weak. They knew the current product but couldn't remember back to version 1.22, much less 1.0. All I wanted to do was ask how to do something in the new version 3.04b that worked well in 1.x. But they didn't know what I was talking about.

Hey!! Version 1.0 came out in November, 1994 just a week after I got my first Internet account. I know computer time moves fast. But 18 months isn't a lifetime. Then I remembered-- The New York Times had a cover feature in its business section the other day. It focused on something it called "Netscape Time," referring to the incredible pace at which new versions of software appear. The Netscape staff proved that the authors were more accurate than they knew.

Anyway, I found something special on this floor as I surfed the net with different browsers in machines with giant screens, T-1 lines and huge amounts of memory. My own pages look better than I had imagined using my creeping 386. The Gropper Windows

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<"http://www.mcs.net/~grossman/gropper.htm"> were amazing---
loading in an instant. Even the huge downloadable files popped open
in an instant. This was fun. There was even a cybercafe, with free
coffee (although the plain black had a hint of hazelnut--yecch!) and a
slew of Thinkpads for surfing.

I looked at my watch. It was after 2:00 p.m. and I hadn't even set foot
on to the main exhibition floor. Well, the assault of the interactive
games was getting to me. I gave up on gaming years ago. How many
times can you shoot so many villains. Aside from Myst, has there
been a really inventive game in all these years. The graphics and
sound have become incredible. The deep bass explosions filled the
room. Avid gamers tried their hand at thelatest with an intensity I
didn't see anywhere else in the show. But I had to move on.. Thank
God!!

Up the escalator to the main floor. It was late and I was just
beginning the real Comdex. In the bright light the spaciousness of
the main hall beckoned. There in front of me was the main IBM
stage. I'll pass, I thought-- even though the grand prize drawing
was a Thinkpad 350. I've learned that the most interesting demos
aren't those with the big prizes and I've never won anyway.. so
off I went to see the real stuff.. Oh, I threw a few baskets and won a
couple of circular mouse pads and a great cap with my initials on it.
I've never heard of a company called LG Semicon before. And the
blue and lavender slinky looks great on my desk.

Suddenly, I realized I hadn't seen Phil Katz yet. Phil is always at these
shows and I always say hello. Phil Katz is the PK of PKZip. And we
all owe him a lot. It's different in these days of huge hard drives.
Heck, I just deleted 60 meg of zipped files from my machine last week.
But boy did we need him when a huge drive was only 40 meg. It
hasn't really been the same since version 2.x came out and was no

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longer compatible with Magellan but I've found ways to survive. Just yesterday a friend needed to sneaker net a 2 meg file. PKZip spread that file over 2 disks and then restored it with no problem.

Then I found his booth. Not nearly as busy as in the old days.   And there in the back was Phil. Looking a little tired. But he always looks a little tired. I waved. He has no idea who I am of course. I tried to tell the young kids handing out his stuff how important he had been to all of us. But we live in the time of Netscape and version 1.10 was light years ago to them, I guess. The same product. The same trinkets. Not pens but one of the most useful gifts at the whole show. A little round plastic container containing a sponge and a shoe polisher. It was strange. But he has given those away for years. Just like he gave away PKZip. Did any of us ever register it? The show was almost over so the kids gave me a handful.

I was tired and disoriented. There was no way I could cover all the rest of the show in the 35 minutes I had left. I came past the IBM pavilion again. The chairs were empty so I sat down for a minute. A few others sat down and then a small crowd. The last show of the day was about to begin. Maybe I'll try for that Thinkpad door prize after all. That way I can just sit for a while before I have to leave.
Then the deep bass voice of a professional announcer began an intro-duction. I couldn't believe it. There in front of me was a member of the 1984 Gold Medal winning U.S. Olympic Gymnastics Team and he was doing a demo. He looked great and fit. And he had some young kids with him to demonstrate the hard stuff. Really young. Half my daughter's age, it seemed. They didn't live in Netscape Time...or did they? On the right on the MacIntosh stage, a song and dance review competed for our attention. Giant speakers filling the room. I was getting dizzy. A pitch for the Olympics -song and dance- sounds from other stages began to whirl. I looked up at the young kid on the uneven bars.

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What am I doing here? I thought. What does this have to do with anything? I suppose its better than the huge T&A show CA Associates used to put on at these events. At least it's more politically correct. But it made no sense.

I politely waited for the kid to finish his routine. I got up.. crumpled my application for the drawing, left it in a garbage can and headed for the shuttle back down town. I could get another hour in at the office.

I checked my mail. There was PCWeek. Absentmindedly I skimmed the table of contents. "Trade Shows: Who needs them?"

Then I looked at the headline on the editorial itself: "Trade Shows Do Evolve - Will You?" Yes, I thought, but into what?

Leonard Grossman in an attorney who works for the government. He is a Windo-Watch regular and has been contributing "Reflections" for some time. Leonard's home page was chosen as a "Best o' comp.infosystems.www.announce" site during April 1996. He is also president of his local user group. Comments can be sent to grossman@mcs.com or leonard.grossman@syslink.mcs.com

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TEACHING 1ST READER
Copyright 1996 by Jonathan J. Helis

One advantage of being a member of the Cajun Clickers Computer Club is that free computer classes are available to its members. I attended a couple of these classes and found them very helpful. But even more interesting was helping to give an Internet seminar at the Baton Rouge Hamfest. That experience motivated me to want to teach a course to the Cajun Clickers membership. After going to an education committee meeting where we discussed upcoming classes, I decided to take on the challenge and volunteered to teach a class.

The class I was scheduled to teach was an introduction to 1st Reader, a combination telecommunications program and offline mail reader program from Sparkware(http://sparkware.com). The software was supported on the Cajun Clickers Computer Club Bulletin Board after the club began distributing a version of the program as a way of attracting more members to call and join the BBS. The software provided a high quality and easy to use terminal program and offline mail reading package. I had already used such terminal programs as Commo 6.5 and Procomm Plus, and offline readers such as Bluewave and OLX, so that an easy to use all in one package looked very good to me. Hopefully it would be as appealing to others as it was to me and I began preparing my lesson for the class which was scheduled for mid-June.

The first thing to do was to obtain a copy of the software from the Cajun Clickers office followed closely by familiarizing myself with the software. Instead of reading the manual, I decided to simply try the

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program, as would most of the users. After all, the selling point of 1ST Reader was ease of use. Testing and using the program would help me try to get into the heads of potential users and determine what points had to be emphasized and how to finally teach it.

I installed 1ST Reader on my computer through DOS, and began using it for my online BBS activities of downloading and reading messages, composing and uploading replies, and logging onto the BBS to make use of files and door programs. None of these activities are at all difficult and indeed, I confirmed that the best way to learn this program was by using it. After three weeks of daily use, I was very familiar with the program and felt ready to teach it.

Mid-June came faster than expected. One worry was that I would not be using my own computer, but a machine provided by the Cajun Clickers. The computer a 486 40 mhz machine with Windows 3.1 was not quite the Pentium 75 I was running, but more than sufficient to run 1ST Reader. I installed the program through DOS and then connected the projector panel to the computer so the images shown on the monitor would be projected onto a screen visible to the class. After running a few tests, everything was working fine and I waited for the students to arrive.

By 1:00 P.M., a total of 18 students had shown up to attend the class. I first explained the concept of a BBS to them. Over the years, I have met many computer users who although knowledgeable about computers, were not aware of the existence of BBSs. I felt it would be useful to explain what a BBS was and what it offered to computer users .

The next step was to begin demonstrating the installation of the program. While in Windows 3.1, I brought up the file manager and clicked on the install.exe file in the directory. The installation went

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fine until we reached the configuration portion of the program. When searching for the modem, the message "modem not found" appeared. I then realized I had not installed the program through Windows 3.1 File Manager. Halting the installation, exiting Windows and then restarting the installation from DOS took care of this problem. When planning to demonstrate something to a class, it is best to try it out first.

Once the program was installed, it was time to demonstrate its use. This was one part of the program that resisted advanced planned unlike the majority of the presentation. Even though the Cajun Clickers BBS has six telephone lines, availability of a line is not predictable. After dialing three lines, the fourth attempt answered with a connect. We logged onto the BBS, downloaded all the new messages in conferences I had subscribed to, and logged off in less than two minutes.

When message download was complete, I began demonstrating the message read and reply functions. The group was very interested in message bases being relayed worldwide and the range of topics available. One participant asked "What is Babylon 5?" referring to a FIDONET conference for fans of that television program that I had subscribed to. Internet Email, which is available through the BBS, was also of major interest to the class. Internet topics always attract interest. Some in the group were pleased to know they could Email friends on the commercial online services through the BBS. A few keystrokes and 1ST Reader was dialing the BBS, uploading new messages and replies, and downloading new message posted since the previous call. This simplicity of use is 1ST Reader's strongest attribute.

Next we demonstrated 1ST Reader as a terminal program by logging onto the BBS. By doing this, I was able to demonstrate BBS functions

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such as door programs, online games, files, and reading messages online. Downloading of shareware files is always exciting to new BBS users just as it was to this group. Some class members had downloaded files, but couldn't get them to run due to the lack of WINZIP or PKUNZIP. Included in 1ST Reader is an Unzip utility for expanding compressed ZIP files. Simply clicking the mouse on a filename begins decompression of the file with prompts to place it into it's own directory. This feature adds to the simplicity of 1ST Reader's use.

I wanted the class to understand that 1ST Reader is a very easy program to learn and use with the Cajun Clickers or any BBS. They walked away with a better understanding of 1ST Reader and BBSes, and are more able to explore the Cajun Clickers BBS offerings.

Teaching this class was a new experience for me. It helped me learn firsthand about teaching and mentoring new users. Anyone who is knowledgeable about computers and has the opportunity to teach a group such as this should really take the opportunity. Helping others learn about something new is not only rewarding, but can also be an important learning experience for the instructor. Computer clubs and User Groups provide an important function by helping new computer users learn the ropes from more experienced members.

Jon Helis is found on many of the Ilink conferences and of course, is a Cajun Clicker in good standing!

You might be a High-Tech RedNeck

 If your E-Mail address ends with over.yonder.com

 If you connect to the World Wide Web via a Down Home Page!

 If the bumper sticker on your truck says, "My other computer is a laptop"

 If you've doubled the value of your truck by adding a cellular phone.

 If your baseball cap reads, DEC instead of CAT.

 If your wife said "either she or the computer had to go" and you still don't miss her!

 If you've ever used a CD-ROM as a coaster to set your beer on.

 If you ever refer to your computer as, " 'Ole Nellie"

 If your screen saver is a bitmap of your favorite truck, tractor, or farm animal.

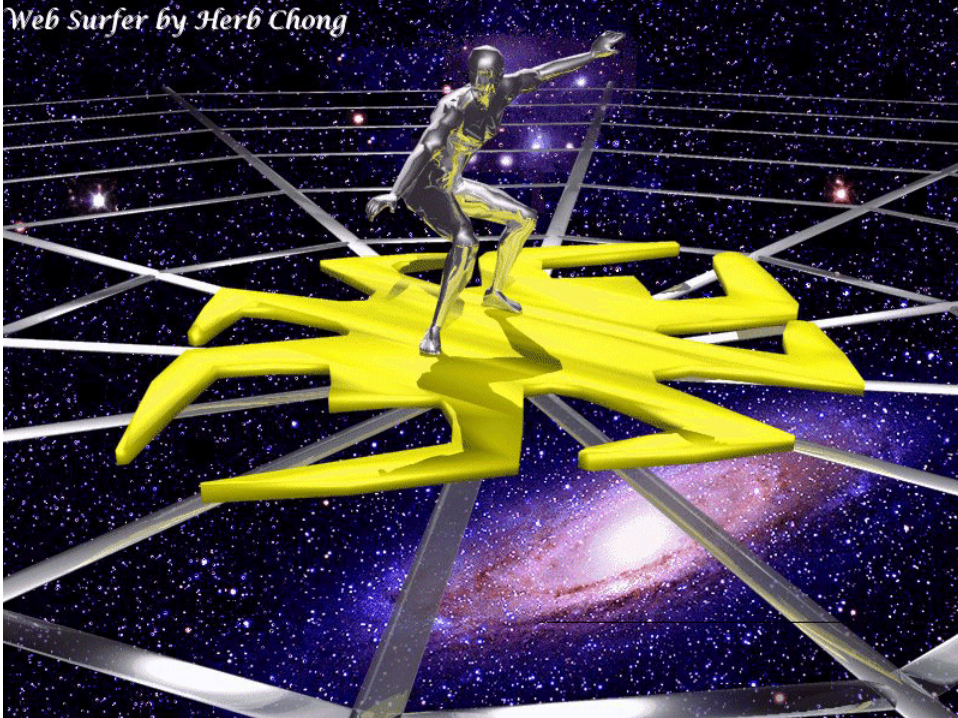 If you start all your E-Mails with, "Howdy Y'all" and end them with "Come on down!"

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Herb Chong's Computer Created Art!

Web Surfer by Herb Chong

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