↑ PRT SC

A newsletter for the Stanford/Palo Alto User's Group for the IBM PC

PRinT SCreen   September 1986   Volume 4 Number 9

NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday, September 24

Time: 8:00 p.m.

Place: Polya Hall,
             Turing Auditorium (Rm. 111)
             Stanford University

AGENDA

8:00 PM   General Club Business

8:30 PM   Speaker: Gordon Eubanks

             Topic: Q&A

9:00 PM   Discussion and Random Access

10:00 PM   Conclusion

Gordon Eubanks, Chairman of the Board of Symantek, will be discussing the product Q&A. Q&A is a database manager and word processor which incorporates a natural language (i.e., English!) interface directed to the "non-expert" user.

PLANNING MEETING:

All members are welcome to attend the monthly Planning Meeting, where we make decisions on the future of the group (e.g., speakers, topics). Please call Beverly Altman, 329-8252, for the location of the next meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, October 15th at 8 p.m. If you can't reach Beverly, call any Club Officer.

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|         C A L E N D A R            |
|                                    |
| Sept. 24...Group Meeting........8:00 |
|                                    |
| Sept. 30...Novice SIG...........8:30 |
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| Oct. 15....Planning Meeting.....8:00 |
|                                    |
| Oct. 29....Group Meeting........8:00 |
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AUGUST MEETING

Our speaker last month was Miriam Liskin, a Computer Currents columnist and author of Advanced dBase III Programming and Techniques. Miriam talked about the appropriateness of using spreadsheet/ databases versus dedicated database programs.

First, she explained the main functions of any database program:

    Define the database
    Enter data
    Edit data
    Produce reports
    Sort data
    Select data

The advantages to a spreadsheet/ database over a dedicated database program are:

o   The spreadsheet is more informal and intuitive. It looks like a printed report, and data can be entered immediately without any formal definitions. Dedicated databases require you to define the structure of the database (field name, width, type) before any data can be entered.

o   Spreadsheets store the entire database in RAM so sorting is much faster.

o   The spreadsheet has more tools available for mathematical calculations.

o   Spreadsheets such as Lotus also offer graphics capabilities.

Dedicated databases have their advantages as well:

o   Larger databases are possible since only part of the database is stored in RAM at any one time.

o   Several different databases can be linked together in a dedicated relational database program.

o   Record selection is more immediate and flexible--no preliminary setup or extra workspace is required.

o   Dedicated databases usually have report generators which offer much better reporting capabilites than a spreadsheet (labels, forms, subtotalling).

o   You can have a formatted data entry screen.

In summary, Miriam recommended that you take advantage of both spreadsheet and dedicated databases. Use each program for what it's best at, import data back and forth, and don't stretch the program's limits.

CLUB NEWS

Membership renewals: For the two months preceding the expiration of your membership you will find a renewal envelope enclosed in your newsletter. Use this envelope to promptly send in your $25 check so that you won't miss an issue of the monthly newsletter. A current membership card will then be sent to you in the next issue of PrtSc.

Remember, the "Goodie Coupon" attached to your membership card is presently good for one free disk: the library catalog, Disk of the Month, or a blank disk. Trade in your coupon for a disk at a future meeting.

We have a new price for Xidex Precision disks: $7/box. The catalog and the Disk of the Month will be offered for $1 a disk. If you wish to purchase disks at the meetings, you will need to present your membership card, so be sure to bring it with you.

NOVICE SIG

Don Baird

Next NOVICE SIG meets Tuesday Sept 30, 1986 at 3785 Farm Hill Blvd. Redwood City.

It's been expressed that some might want to bring an item to complement the refreshments. This is completely optional, but if contemplated, please call (415-365-6822) so variety can result. Bring a blank floppy for sharing public software.

The Sept 9 meeting inevitably got into wide mix of topics, but we all felt that a concerted effort would better teach us more about the practice of extensions - even as they are used in large applications packages. Each of us will attempt a small report on some aspect of the subject for the next meeting.

Rudy Polacek gave us all a copy of BATTUT & RUNME to improve our use of BAT (batch) files. Henry Hollwedel gave 2000 sheets of paper for Xeroxing.

Sally See has printer problems evidenced by squeals. Rudy suggested that oil (special type) on the print-head rod might be the answer. We all might reflect on whether it's a neglect common to most of our printers. Bob Phillips thought we might submit our computer problems and their solutions to the newsletter. So be it.

Someone mentioned having speakers. More discussion is needed on this as it seems more in the province of the main group. Perhaps having certain group members give us in-depth talks on common but obtuse topics, may be good.

Contact Don Baird at 415-365-6822 if you have any questions or need further information about the Novice Special Interest Group.

BULLETIN BOARD

Jay Fox, the Sys Op, reports that the bulletin board is being used 4-5 hours a day on the average. If you haven't registered yet, please sign and read the enclosed agreement and send to:

Beverly Altman
1670 Oak Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025

The phone number is 964-9039, and you can call 24 hours a day. Each call is limited to 60 minutes. (This was raised from 45 minutes.)

BULLETIN BOARD MESSAGES

Jay Fox

If you prefer to type your bulletin board messages in your favorite word processor, here are the steps:

1. Type the file in your word processor and save it as an ASCII text file. Be sure the message does not exceed 32 lines (including blank lines), which is the maximum message length. Also be sure that each line has no more than 72 characters.

2. When you have the file ready, call SPACE and use the ▌E▌ command. Manually enter the message header information (To, Subject, etc.) as you would normally do. After you enter the header, the form for manually entering the body of the message appears and you are prompted for the first line.

3. At this point, instead of manually entering the message, simply use the Upload function in your comm software to transfer the file that contains your message. Be sure to select ASCII protocol when you initiate the upload. As the upload proceeds, you will see the contents of your file being copied into the body of the message as though you were manually entering the message.

4. When the transfer is complete, enter 'S' to ▌S▌ave the message. Done!!!

USING THE CLUB'S SOFTWARE LIBRARY

R. F. Muraca

The SPAUG software library now has more than 1500 programs conveniently arranged in subdirectories; there are more than 200 disks, all available to you FREE from club librarians (if you supply the disks)!!. Moreover, a disk generally will have a number of related programs -- a real bargain -- and much cheaper than obtaining them by modem.

Programs are listed in the club's catalog that also is available on your floppy disk -- FREE. In the catalog, programs are grouped into about 30 different categories, such as GAMES, SPORTS, BUSINESS, GRAPHICS, etc. Each category is a separate file, for example, SPORTS.DTA, or BUSINESS.DTA; these category files are accessed separately by the LIBCAT program provided FREE to members (their disks). The LIBCAT program displays on screen (or hardcopy) the programs in one, a number, or all categories; it also can find any program by name.

In an emergency, DOS can be used to display the contents of any category file. For example, enter:- TYPE A:\BUSINESS.DTA to get a display of the contents of the BUSINESS category file. Because catalog entries are contiguous, some words in the displayed lines will run into each other; all words are separated in LIBCAT outputs.

Although the catalog was not prepared to be used for keyword searches (which require that entries be constructed from a fairly fixed set of keywords), it is possible to search category files for any word or phrase. Since the current version of LIBCAT does not permit keyword search, use the little-known DOS utility called FIND. For example, let's assume you want to locate a BUSINESS program that deals with ledgers, and that the category files are in drive A; at DOS prompt, enter:-

FIND "LEDGER" A:▌BUSINESS.DTA

DOS will display at least three entries, of which only one is a program aptly named LEDGER; the others are subdirectory descriptors that include the word. These could have been found only by laborious reading of all entries in BUSINESS.DTA. (A new version of the LIBCAT program - written in "C" - will include meaningful keyword searches of an upgraded catalog.)

Programs in the software library are in public domain or are User Supported. Public domain implies donated to the user with no strings attached. User Supported software (also Shareware) is copyrighted; though distribution is encouraged for you to try the software, it is assumed that if found useful, a fee will be sent to the copyright holder; usually, receipt of the fee is acknowledged by transmittal of a hardcopy manual and program updates.

Generally, a program has a separate documentation file that gives instructions on how to use it. In many instances, the program itself will display on your screen some form of instruction; but a large number of programs simply are not documented in any way, and you will have to learn about them by search of files.

When you receive a disk from SPAUG's library, there will most likely be more than one program on it. Each program usually is in a subdirectory that includes all pertinent files. In general, the subdirectory name is the same as the program, but in the SPAUG library, similar programs are put

S O F T W A R E   L I B R A R Y
(continued)

into one subdirectory. For example,
PACKMAN, PATHMAN, PCMAN, PCMAN2,
etc., will be in subdirectory
PACKMAN.

To see what's on a library
disk, put it in drive A, and at the
A prompt type DIR and press ENTER.
The directory will appear on screen.

Directory entries without DIR
are in root directory, and files
pertaining to a program are clearly
displayed. However, the files in a
subdirectory must be displayed by a
different command; type:-

    DIR A:\SUBDIR

where SUBDIR is the subdirectory you
want displayed. Files and programs
in subdirectories usually are
accessible to most programs; for
example, PACKMAN.BAS may be loaded
and run from a subdirectory by the
BASICA interpreter:-

    LOAD "A:\SUBDIR\PACKMAN.BAS"

(Use your subdirectory name in place
of SUBDIR.) However, if a data file
is to be called, the program is
not aware that the file is in a
subdirectory, and so "FILE NOT FOUND"
is dutifully exhibited.

Without specific instructions,
BASICA looks for a file in the
default-drive root directory, that
is, the drive that had the
COMMAND.COM file loaded into RAM on
reboot or power-on (quite frequently,
the directory that also has
BASICA). To make BASICA search other
drives, you must change its current
drive from the default drive to the
one that has the disk with your
program in subdirectory.

As a direct example, let's assume
that the default drive is A and

that B has the BASIC program and
data files in a subdirectory called
SUBDIR. At the A prompt, type:- CD
B:\ and when the prompt reappears,
type:- B: to make the B prompt
appear. Ordinarily, the A drive
will still have in it the DOS disk
with BASICA on it. Type:- A:\BASICA
to load BASICA from the A drive
while the B prompt shows. This copy
of BASICA will search the B drive
for files; all that remains to be
done is to specify the subdirectory.
When in BASICA, enter:-

    CHDIR "B:\SUBDIR"

and then enter:- LOAD "PACKMAN" to
have BASIC fetch your program; now,
should the program require file
access, the appropriate path will be
invoked.

(continued)

and in 1/10,000th of a second, it can compound
the programmer's error 87,500 times!

SOFTWARE LIBRARY
(continued)

.EXE and .COM programs may also be instructed to use subdirectories. As a rule, use CD X: SUBDIR to force a change from the power-on or reboot default to the drive: subdirectory having the program and its data files. Beginners might want to avoid problems by moving the library disk subdirectory to the root directory of a formatted disk via DOS:-
    COPY A:\SUBDIR*.* B:\

Then reboot or power-on the computer with IBM's DOS disk in drive A; replace the DOS disk with one that has program files copied from the library disk.

If the computer boots from a hard disk, transfer the library disk subdirectory files to the hard disk root directory. Transferral of files to the root directory of a new disk is strongly recommended when a new program doesn't run properly, for if a program in a root directory doesn't operate in the same drive that the computer was powered-on, the operator is exonerated.

When studying a list of files, note the extensions. Some extensions are easily recognized by experienced members, but there undoubtedly are many members who simply are not aware that extensions are valuable clues. The list that follows gives some popular extensions and what they mean.

An asterisk means the file can be displayed by DOS TYPE; an asterisk within parentheses means that the display may not be entirely decipherable. The .BAS files are displayed by the BASIC command, LIST. The .xQx files and the .ARC files must be processed by the USQ.COM program or by the ARC.EXE program, respectively, before they can be used.

Before trying to run any program for the first time, try to get an idea of program structure by applying the DOS TYPE command to files with extensions that have asterisks in the list below.

FILE EXTENSIONS

.ABS - Abstract; program description. *
.APL - APL source file.
.ARC - Archived file; a squeezed file.
.ASC - ASCII text or BASIC program. *
.ASM - Assembly language source file. *
.BAS - BASIC program (tokenized listing).
.BAT - Batch file. *
.C - "C" language source file. *
.COM - Command file (machine language).
.CRF - Cross-reference file. *
.CRN - Crunch; abbreviated program file.
.DAT - Data file. (*)
.DBF - dBASE file.
.DEF - Program set-up file. (*)
.DOC - Documentation file. *
.DTA - Data file. (*)
.EXE - Execute file (machine language).
.FOR - FORTRAN file.
.FRM - dBASE file.
.LIB - Compiler library file.
.LPT - Printer file. (*)
.ME - Usually part of READ.ME file. *
.MNU - Usually has a menu. *
.MSG - Message file (documentary). *
.NDX - dBASE index file.
.OBJ - Object files for use by LINKER.
.PAS - PASCAL source file.
.PIC - Color-Graphic screen image.
.PRG - dBASE program file.
.PRO - Program defaults file.
.PRT - Printer file (defaults). (*)
.xQx - Squeezed file, e.g., .DQC = DOC
.TXT - Text file. *
.UNP - Text file to unprotect program.
.VC - VISICALC template.
.WKS - LOTUS-1-2-3 worksheet file.
.WRK - SYMPHONY file.

S P A C E
The Stanford/Palo Alto Computer Exchange

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

SPACE is a BBS (Bulletin Board System) operated by and for members of the Stanford/Palo Alto User's Group for the IBM PC (SPAUG). Full access to the BBS is available only to current members of the group.

The purpose of SPACE is to promote the free exchange, among SPAUG members, of ideas, opinions, information, software and technology related to the IBM PC and its uses and applications, provided the use and operation of the BBS and the content of the data exchanged on it (a) does not compromise the national security of the United States, and (b) does not violate the rights, interests or personal property of others, or any applicable local, state or federal law.

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

All data, information and files contained within the BBS are provided to users of the BBS "as is", without representation or warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The entire risk of using or acting on such data, information and files rests solely with the user of the BBS and not with SPACE or the Stanford/Palo Alto IBM User's Group, including the sysop and the officers of same.

RULES GOVERNING USE OF THE BBS
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1. The BBS will be password-secured. Each user will establish his own password, ensure that it is kept confidential and secure, not divulge it to any other person, and change it promptly whenever he has reason to believe that its security has been compromised.

2. Aliases and "handles" will not be used. Each user will use only his real name and other identifying information when logging onto or using the BBS, and will fully disclose any financial or commercial interest he has in any product or service on which he expresses an opinion.

3. Only public domain and other software for which permission to freely copy and distribute has clearly been granted will be uploaded to the BBS. Each user will ensure that he does not knowingly upload copyrighted and commercially-marketed software for distribution on the BBS without the permission of its owners to do so.

4. Each user will ensure that the rules governing the use of the BBS are adhered to and enforced, and will promptly notify the sysop or any officer whenever he discovers any violations of same.

I acknowledge and agree to the Statement of Purpose, Disclaimer of Liability, and Rules Governing Use of SPACE, the BBS of the Stanford/Palo Alto User's Group for the IBM PC, all as set forth above.

Dated: July 30, 1986

I have read and agree to the Statement of Purpose, Disclaimer of Liability, and Rules Governing Use of SPACE, the BBS of the Stanford/Palo Alto User's Group for the IBM PC, all as set forth in the attached document dated July 30, 1986.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Please PRINT the password you will use the FIRST time that you log onto SPACE. (Note: You can, and should, change your password during your first call, or at any later date.) Your password can be any string of at least three and not more than twelve alphabetic, numeric or special characters, except spaces. DO NOT use your first name or your last name as a password.

Password for first call: _____

                    (Please print logon names clearly)
Please furnish the following telephone numbers (including area code) and information:

1. Your home telephone (voice): _____

2. Your business hours telephone (voice): _____

3. Telephone (data) that you will normally use to call SPACE: _____

    a. Is this a residence or business line? _____

    b. Is it dedicated to data, or used for both voice and data? _____

If you haven't registered for the club bulletin board yet, please sign and read this agreement. Either bring the form to the meeting or send to:

    Beverly Altman
    1670 Oak Avenue
    Menlo Park, CA 94025

CLUB OFFICERS:

President:	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Vice President:	Rebecca Bridges	326-8605
Financial Manager:	Beverly Altman	329-8252
ASSU Representative	Curt Carlson	941-5680
Speaker's Bureau:	Kathy Carroll	325-0824

SIGS:

FrameWork:	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Novice:	Don Baird	365-6822

LIBRARY:

Public Domain Software	Les Weil	321-5541
Soft Copy	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
	Ralph Muraca	365-1659
	Turley Angle	369-1981

RESOURCE PEOPLE

Application Packages:

WordStar	Jonathan Steibel	494-0122
MicroSoft Word	Jeanie Treichel	851-8828
Lotus 1-2-3	Bruce Codding	367-8642
	Nicholas de Paul	424-6968
Framework	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
Financial Software	John Van Deman	854-1167
Perfect Series	Stefan Unger	321-7319
Q&A	Elaine Meyer	325-8057

Languages/Operating Systems:

Pascal, DOS 2.0	Jeff	321-5930
	Jonathan Steibel	494-0122
"C"	Corwin Nichols	494-8640
	Jonathan Steibel	494-0122
APL	Paul	968-8283
	Stefan Unger	321-7319

Hardware:

Expansion Boards	Curt Carlson	941-5680
Columbia computer	Stefan Unger	321-7319
Hard disks	Jim Caldwell	692-7181
	Jonathan Steibel	494-0122
Epson printers	Jim Caldwell	692-7181

CLUB   INFORMATION

        MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 3738
                                Stanford, CA   94305

        MEMBERSHIP: Louise Greer Bolitho   493-0979
                                $25/year fee

        BULLETIN BOARD: Jay Fox, System Operator
                                964-9039, 24 hours a day

        NEWSLETTER: Rebecca Bridges   326-8605
                                                        P.O. Box 982
                                                        Palo Alto, CA   94302
                                Deadline for submissions: 15th of each month

ADVERTISING

If you are interested in advertising in PRinT SCreen, send camera ready
copy to P.O. Box 3738, Stanford, CA   94305 before the 8th of the month.
All ads are payable by check in advance. Rates per issue are:

    Full Page (8.5 X 11) $25.
    Half Page (7.5 X 4.5) $15.
    Qtr. Page (4.5 X 3.5) $10.

Classified ads are free to paying members.

The Stanford/Palo Alto
Users Group for the IBM PC
Box 3738 STANFORD, CA 94305