

S.P.A.U.G

Stanford
Palo Alto
Users Group

PRINT SCREEN

The Newsletter of Stanford/Palo Alto PC Users Group

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CLASSIFIED

SPAUG RESOURCE CENTRE

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MAY MEETING

Last Wednesday: May 29th, 7.30pm at Turing Auditorium

MEET THE MAN WITH HIS FINGER ON THE PULSE OF SILICON VALLEY

Ever wondered how computers are used in investigative reporting?

Intrigued about future trends in computing?

Learn this and more from:

**Rory J. O'Connor, the Computing Editor of
the San Jose Mercury News**

The President's Piece

For those who weren't at last month's meeting, we had a great demo by Brian Dougherty of GeoWorks. I don't know about the rest of you, but I felt inspired to explore GW a little more deeply. I've been using it primarily for the word processor, which is simple and easy to use. It also has incredible output, even on my lowly 9-pin dot matrix. GW is a very useful product with good momentum in the marketplace. Now they need applications to make it really useful to a wider range of users.

I did a little exploring on their online service, America OnLine. AOL is much easier to use than, say, CompuServe; however, at this time it doesn't have nearly as much to offer. I did find a handy little shareware program among their downloadable files. It's called ARMOUSE, and it makes your mouse functional on the DOS command line. The left button functions as the Enter key, right button as the Esc key, and if you have a three button mouse, the middle button functions as the Del key. Moving the mouse moves the cursor. It also gives you use of your mouse in programs that don't normally support the device. I was very pleased with it, and it's only \$10. Such a deal!

SPAUG COMPUTERS

The group needs new equipment, especially the BBS. It's been limping along for several months now with one of its hard drives dead. It's time to beg, borrow, steal, or better yet, have new equipment donated to us! So, call all your friends, clients and business associates. How about that buddy you've got who says his company is looking for some good promo? In return, we'll offer free advertising, unending plugs at the meetings, plus we'll send as much business their way as we can.

We actually need two different systems. One for the BBS, and a separate system for our use at the monthly meetings. The system for the BBS needs to be a desktop machine. The other machine could possibly be a portable. This would make it so much easier to set up and move around.

Put on your thinking cap and make a few calls! For heaven's sake, we live in the middle of Silicon Valley, the world's headquarters for computers. Surely we can find what we need in the midst of this bounty!

TELL US A STORY.....

Why did you buy your computer? What's your favorite program? And why? When was the last time you felt like throwing the damn thing through the nearest window? Why? Everybody's got a story to tell. So, tell us yours and we'll print it here. How about your computer wish list? What about that free software you won? Did it do what it claimed it could? We need fresh input from some fresh voices. It doesn't have to be fancy or long, just real. Tell us your story.

CONSTITUTION CHANGES

Our constitution has been amended slightly. The main reason for doing this has been to attempt to assure that if SPAUG moves or dissolves, all funds and other assets stay with SPAUG. As it stands now, Stanford would claim all our funds and assets. We don't think this makes any sense at all. So, take a look at the revised constitution included in this newsletter, especially Article V. This was rewritten so that these items would remain with the club, and not revert to Stanford if the club moved or dissolved. We'll take a vote on it at the May general meeting.

A major "THANK YOU" goes to Nancy Helmy who put in a lot of work on the various drafts this project.

NOVICE SIG

Here we go again! Our novice SIG has certainly had it's ups and downs. At this point, there is no SIG to offer. The response has been sporadic at best. So, what will work? We're going to try a series of classes, maybe 4-5, that have a set format. These can be repeated as the need arises. Each class will have a topic that will be covered, followed by a random access session. This is still in the formative stage, so how would you like to help? Have any ideas? Want to teach one of the sessions? With a large dose of enthusiasm, a little experience is all that's needed to make you into a teacher.

BETTER MAGAZINE RATES

Ziff-Davis has a discount offer on several of their computer magazines for SPAUG members. Call 1-800-777-2547, tell them you want the user group rate and they'll set you up. The following are available:

P.C. Magazine	\$24.97/yr
P.C. Computing	\$14.97/yr
Computer Shopper	\$14.99/yr
P.C. Sources	\$12.97/yr
Mac User (?)	\$13.50/yr

THE BBS IN PRINT

BOB BOTTINI

Bob is the BBS Sysop

(415) 321-4497

THE NEW BULLETIN BOARD NUMBER

Report to members on the developments in our renovation of both the hardware and software of our electronic bulletin board.

As you all know we have had a crash of our venerable "D" hard drive in our equally venerable IBM AT 286/8MHz, BBS computer. Our remaining "C" hard drive is still functioning but is so ancient the it truly belongs in a museum. It, the "C" hard drive, operates at about 180ms and is the size of a large lunch box. We have our BBS "Wildcat" software on our remaining hard drive. It has been working, but we cannot download applications in our library because our files were on the crashed hard drive.

This all happened just as we were changing the political guard. We have gotten over that hurdle; we have a new president, Paul Staley. Also a critical factor was our constitution which was in the process of being updated to meet the current requirements of Stanford University. Critical in that update was the matter of physical ownership of any new additions to physical equipment. The new constitution has been revised largely through the efforts of Nancy Helmy. It will be presented to the membership for consideration at this month's general meeting.

It has been suggested by one of our members that we may as the "Stanford/Palo Alto Computer Club" be able to receive some assistance in the form of computer equipment donations, from local computer manufacturers. We are actively persuing this suggestion. We will be able to proceed with the acquisition of equipment, by whatever means, now that we are close to adoption of a new constitution. For my part, I have gotten competitive pricing on computers from various sources.

As a point of interest to our membership, the pricing of hardware has fallen considerably in recent times and I have been able to come up with a price for a basic computer, 386/33 by Intel and/or 386/40 by AMD with I/O card, a 1.2 floppy, controller card, 1 MB memory at around \$1000. A 200+ MB, hard drive goes for around \$800. When we get to 300 MB hard drives the price rises to around \$1200, including a controller. We are talking of hard drives that perform a random access at or below 15 milliseconds.

If you are in a position to help me better these prices please call me with your sources. I am hoping however, that we can find a corporate sponsor who will donate a computer.

We have been getting quite a few people who have been calling our BBS and expressing interest. There have been 25 people in the last month alone. Dennis Wilson, one of our new members, is helping as a sysop, and he has been calling these people, he says that he has three new members and he has, as yet, called only half of the people who showed interest. This shows that the BBS can be an important source of new membership. It also indicates that we have to move as rapidly as is practicable to make our BBS fully functional by the acquisition of replacement hardware.

FEEDBACK PLEASE

What would you like to see and access on our BBS besides the latest shareware computer applications? We are thinking of having many different departments. There is, for example, a large amount of theatre in the Bay Area. We plan to give monthly updates of the theatre happenings. Also, there are a lot of great restaurants in the area. A list of them along with their fare and some comments by our members who have tried them might be of interest. We need to know of other services that our BBS might do for you. Please let me know. Just drop me a note, either on the BBS, or by mail to our box at Stanford.

A BIG WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS

Thomas Alben	Campbell
Lee Bentz	Mountain View
Alan Lambert	LosAltos

Renewals

Gunter Steffen	Menlo Park
Zvi Kirschenbaum	San Carlos
Donna Philpott	Sunnyvale

DOS TIPS

RICK ALTMAN

5

Tips for Better DOS Management

It comes as no surprise that thousands — perhaps millions — of MS-DOS users search in vain for that one utility program that will solve all of their problems and organize their entire system. After all, virtually every program in the “DOS utilities” category advertises itself as the ultimate panacea. Why shouldn't we believe that it's possible?

Always the optimist, I would love to meet such a program. I'd also love for the Golden State Warriors to win an NBA championship, but I'm not going to hold my breath for either event. In the case of the latter, I wait for a good point guard and a power forward; in the case of the former, I try to turn a mountain into several molehills. There may not be THE ANSWER to DOS management, but there may be several little answers that will do just as well.

Here are five of my favorite mini-solutions to the little nagging problems that DOS presents to all of its users. In all cases, these tips are free or are available at nominal cost.

1. “SEE” YOUR DIRECTORY STRUCTURE

Keep your root directory clean and uncluttered. An important step to being able to manage your hard disk is to be able to visualize its structure, and you can't do that if a simple “DIR” command sends your screen on a marathon. You should be able to display your root directory on one screen.

Really, you only need three files in your root — AUTOEXEC, CONFIG and COMMAND. Everything else can go. Your batch files should be in a separate subdirectory, your DOS files in their own subdirectory and your miscellaneous utilities in a subdirectory, with all three subdirectories listed in your PATH statement.

If you're writing files in your root, wean yourself away from that habit, and if you've already got piles of files cluttering up your root, move them. If you're got more top-level directories than can fit on one screen, see if it makes sense to place any top-level directories one level lower under another top-level directory. Use the public domain program RED to speed the task of moving files, or use a simple batch file:

```
echo off
echo Moving %1 to %2
copy %1 %2
del %1
```

where “%1” is the file and “%2” is the new home for the file.

2. SORT YOUR DIRECTORIES OFTEN

Continuing the theme of being able to visualize your directory structure, having a neatly alphabetized directory is a tremendous aid. It helps to have all of the EXE files together, all of the TXT files together, and it is also a boon to show all of the subdirectories first and then all of the files. There are TSRs that show you

directories thousands of different ways, but when push comes to shove, most of us rely on the DIR command. It is then that a sorted directory will make life easier for you.

If you do not have a directory sorting program already, DIRSORT is available in the public domain. This program allows you to sort by name or by extension.

3. JETTISON THOSE BACKUP FILES

Once every three months or so, having BAK files on your disk proves to be a life-saver. The rest of the time, they make a mess. One client of mine ran out of disk space long before she should have and couldn't figure out why. With nothing more than a “DEL *.BAK” here and there, we recovered over 2 Megabytes of space.

In addition to consuming space, backup files are one more obstacle to your being able to effectively visualize your subdirectories and their contents.

Most of us don't erase backup files because we're too lazy—too many keystrokes involved. Here's a batch file that will erase backup files AND sort the current directory for you, so you no longer have an excuse. Name it 1.BAT (so it will cost you a mere two keystrokes) and keep it in your \BATCH directory:

```
echo off
del *.bak
dirstort /n
dir
```

If you have other programs that create backup files, add other DEL statements before the “dirstort” command (Ventura Publisher users, for instance, may want to include a “DEL *.\$**”).

To sort and view the current directory, press 1 and <Ret>. Easy enough for you?

4. GIVE YOUR BATCH FILES SOME SMARTS

Batch files are great for doing several things at once, but when they are done, they dump you off in whatever subdirectory they end up in, without regard to the directory you were in when you invoked the batch file. Wouldn't it be great if your batch files that involve “ChDir” commands would know to return you to the one from which they started?

Ask and ye shall receive. There are two methods to accomplish this: the easy way and the do-it-yourself way. The easy way is to find a program called “NEWDIR,” available in the public domain (see address below). Place the command NEWDIR in your batch files before any CD commands, and then the command OLDDIR at the end. NEWDIR checks the current path and OLDDIR returns you to it. NEWDIR creates OLDDIR each time it is run, placing it on the root directory of the drive of your choice. If you have a RAM disk, that is the best location for OLDDIR.

Rick Altman is a past president of SPAUG, and is the author of a number of books on Ventura Publisher and Corel Draw. He trains and lectures on desktop publishing throughout California and can be reached at (408) 252-5448.

The other way is through a nifty routine that you can insert in your batch files that does essentially the same thing as NEWDIR, although not quite as elegantly. Let's say that you want your Lotus 1-2-3 batch file to return you to the subdirectory you were in when you started. Instead of the simple:

```
echo off
cd\lotus
123
```

your batch file would look like this instead:

```
echo off
cd >d:path
copy d:change+d:path d:newpath.bat
cd\lotus
123
d:newpath
```

Substitute the letter of your RAM disk for each d: in this example.

5. SET UP ARCHIVES FOR OLD FILES

Such a dilemma: Do you move that tired old text file from your hard disk to a floppy, or might you need to have it close by? Half the time, we remove files from our hard disks because we just don't know what else to do with them.

The public domain to the rescue again. There is a program called ARC which allows you to combine and compress files into one. The result is a file with an extension of ARC that is recognized by DOS as a single, legitimate file.

While a true god-send for those who send files via modem, it is also good for the frustrated DOS user who just doesn't know what to do with that set of 12 DOC files that are cluttering up a directory. With ARC, you can take those 12 files and turn them into one file, with a relevant and meaningful name of your own choosing. ARC files copy freely from one directory to another or to another disk drive. At any point, an ARC file can be updated, added to, extracted from, or simply viewed for its contents.

For those who need to keep a lot of information accessible but who have limited storage space, ARC is the answer.

Notice the common theme throughout these five tips: Combat the chaos of DOS. Keep your directories clean, control the flow of your batch files, sort and manage the files within each subdirectory. If you want to continue the search for a mega-program that will butter your toast for you, be my guest. But those programs, assuming they exist, will only serve to insulate you from effective file management. The high road to good DOS management involves audience participation, via a series of small utilities and batch files that you create and manipulate. That way, true control of your system is in your hands, which is the way it should be.

"Software Challenges for the 1990s"

Jim Manzi

*President and CEO of
Lotus Development
Corporation.*

Throughout the 60s, computers consisted primarily of large, slow mainframes. The software was computer punch cards. Computer use was tedious and limited to a small number of people. Back just before 1970, Digital Equipment Corporation introduced new low-cost mini-computers that could be easily used by many on-line users as time sharing systems. These systems made computers accessible to a much larger class of more casual users. Then, just before 1980, Apple Computer introduced the Apple II.

Steven Jobs announced to the world that some time soon individuals would use computers to perform all kinds of tasks thought to require mainframes or mini-computers. IBM endorsed this idea by introducing its very successful IBM PC. It is difficult to pinpoint the time, but at some point between 1979 and the mid 1980s, we all began to take these technologies for granted. A fast-growing, ever-evolving volume of software helped us to put our arms around the technology and fall in love. Then comfortable with the adoration, we began to develop a sense of demands and expectations; we adored occasionally and expected more and more. Three decades later, companies are still trying to solve the riddle of customer satisfaction, looking for ways to earn the loyalty of demanding customers into the next century.

The PC user of the 1990s is radically different from the novice that vendors courted only 10 years ago. Today's user has spent a decade discovering what is possible. Software vendors have invested millions of dollars in research and development to make sure that the possible becomes reality. As customers have learned what software can do, they have gained an acute understanding of what it does not do, and there are a number of areas in which they are looking for progress. This progress, in all its elements, constitutes what I see as the major software challenge of the 1990s. Let's examine the short list of the challenges customers expect vendors to meet.

Making computers easier to use

During the past ten years, users have absorbed a monumental amount of technology. The past decade was a long dog-and-pony show, with vendors concentrating on delivering increasingly advanced functionality to customers. Vendors have paid considerable lip service to training and user-friendliness, but the race to deliver competitive functionality has not addressed the user's need for technology that is truly easy to use. Vendors continue to sell concepts of power, speed and multi-dimensionality. Power, however, does not mean ease of use. This aggregation of toys cannot go on forever, and sometime very soon, vendors will have to provide solutions that are intuitive. Ideally, customers would like to shop for software as they do for shoes, searching for a good fit that can be worn out of the store. I believe that customers will become more vocal about this during the coming decade.

(continued)

Integrating applications

Vendors have already begun responding to user's interest in having two applications work together while remaining separate. They want software without boundaries — boundaries like incompatible file formats, different interfaces for cross-platform versions of the same product, proprietary differences on hardware platforms. Users want to take advantage of the strengths of one application while working in another. We are beginning to see this kind of integration but are far from realizing its potential. For example, Lotus and other vendors collaborated on and are now supporting a specification for the OLE (object linking and embedding) protocol, but there's a lot more work to be done before users are to realize the full benefit of application integration.

Integration technologies will never realize their potential without an unprecedented commitment to collaboration among competitors. The vendors will have to work together on establishing standards and independently weigh opportunities for collaboration against the risks of including competitors in their development processes. They must see the visual design and output of a software program as opportunities to develop unique selling attributes. As with buying a pair of shoes, the use concentrates on comfort and style. Improving product development cycles.

Over the past several years, as applications have grown in complexity, so has the time required to build them. Applications will continue to perform increasingly complex tasks, but developers and vendors must meet the challenge of devising better development management techniques to reduce the time associated with product enhancement. They will have to figure out how to build on their past accomplishments, how to create something new without starting from scratch.

Making networking simple

For the past 5 years, we have seen the demand for good networking technology grow dramatically. Customers have realized productivity gains and investment efficiencies. Even small and mid-size companies are interested in connecting their employees, many of them at multiple sites. Still, networking remains cumbersome and undependable. The elements that make up a complete networking solution are not well synchronized. The software doesn't come with the hardware. Down time on networks is still unacceptable to most customers. In addition, system and licensing standards have not really emerged to make network technology a simple reality. At some point, using networks must become similar to using telephones; the immense amount of support required to maintain the technology must become transparent to its users.

Addressing evolving service requirements

To a great extent, service will drive the next cycle of growth in the PC industry — not because the pace of technological change has slowed, but because it has often become too rapid. Quite simply,

we have given our customers more raw processing power than they can put to use right now, more new applications than they can make sense of, and we have created mixed operating environments that must appear to many customers like their worst nightmare. Vendors will have to expand the notion of what they do and realize that exponential increases in service accompany linear increases in functionality unless products are designed so that they work comfortably and obviously out of the box. User groups, which were started so that computer users could meet other users to share information, ideas and solutions, were initially created to provide a source of support that was not being provided by vendors. Happily, software developers have caught on to the great opportunity that user groups give them for direct feedback and suggestion from the individuals — not the administrators — who depend on the technologies hour-to-hour, day-to-day. Going forward, the user group model must be expanded upon. Most vendor/user group contact now takes place at large meetings where products are presented only as faits accomplis. User groups will make an astonishing contribution to the vendors' creative process if we can find workable ways to include them.

Staying in touch with users and expanding upon the user group model

Vendors speak quite a lot about listening to users and addressing their needs. The truth still remains, however, that most of the information about how customers are using technologies comes from MIS departments rather than from end-users. This was not really a problem at the beginning of the PC boom, when we were simply putting technology on the market and letting users figure out how it might best be used.

For example, when Lotus shipped the first version of 1-2-3, the product's developer had a narrow idea of its application. Users found myriad uses, and people were willing to buy the product in order to have a chance at figuring something out. Today, users really know what the kinks are, and they can tell us a lot if we succeed at gaining exposure to them.

Incorporating new technologies while maintaining a customer focus

The issue of enriching the role of user groups speaks to the ultimate challenge that vendors face going forward; incorporating new technologies while maintaining a focus on customers as people who are trying to get work done.

Without it, software makers will fail, and users will be disappointed. This is a focus that vendors must maintain in design, development, marketing, service and customer contact.

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SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS HAVE CAUGHT ON TO THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY THAT USER GROUPS GIVE THEM FOR DIRECT FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTION FROM THE INDIVIDUALS

Are Good Software Programs And Good Customer Support Mutually Exclusive?

Alan Ashton

Alan Ashton is president and co-founder of WordPerfect Corporation.

A good software company should offer not only good software products, but excellent customer support as well. However, when one looks at American companies in general which offer both products and services, experience and opinions seem to agree there is a paradox: that good products and good support are not found together.

The National Family Opinion Group is a recent study of six thousand households reported that

"the vast majority of consumers believe that they receive good value for their dollar when they purchase products, but there is a rather pervasive discontent with what they get for the money they pay for services."

In response to a survey of fifteen hundred people, Cambridge Reports found that only eight percent responded "Excellent" to the question. "How well do service companies meet your needs and concerns as a consumer?" Forty-two percent said "fair," "poor," or "depends on the service."

The TARP National Consumer Survey reported that, at any given moment, one in four customers of the average American organization is upset with the company's service.

Personal service has become a maddeningly rare commodity in the American marketplace. Many flight attendants, sales clerks and bank tellers seem to be too busy to give consumers much attention. Many service workers

are underpaid, untrained, unmotivated, and unhelpful to the dismay of customers who look to them for assistance.

The concept of personal service is a difficult quantity to measure precisely, to be sure; the U.S. Government keeps no Courtesy index or Helpfulness indicator among its economic statistics. "But customers know service when they miss it, and now they want it back," say Thomas Peters, a management consultant and co-author of *In Search of Excellence*; "In general, service in America stinks."

Given that customer satisfaction is lacking in many transactions, let's discuss the paradox of product and support in relation to computer software.

The concept of customer support for personal computer software varies according to the business philosophy of the software manufacturer. The original expectation was that technical advice was free and only a phone call away. The responsibility of software support has yet to be resolved in the personal computer industry; however, many manufacturers are trying to transfer the responsibility of support to the dealers and end-users.

Today, more companies are defecting from the ranks, arguing that free support is no longer a realistic expectation. Currently, software support comes packaged in a variety of categories from toll-free support to pre-paid premium support, and even, pre-paid third-party support.

Although the categories for the various support packages have different names, the difference in the support packages is the illusion of the quality of services offered.

Software manufacturers have placed elaborate names on their services to entice end-users to pay for support packages. The factor that should determine the quality of the support is not necessarily the time required to get to a support operator but, the quality of the answers and follow-through given by the support operators.

According to Roberta Furger, "*PC World surveyed a thousand business users, backed by extensive interviews with users and vendors, and the results show the gulf is broadening between what vendors are willing and able to provide and what most users have come to expect.*"

The survey goes on to state, "*That the respondents consider technical support one of the most important factors in their purchase decisions. When service was lacking, roughly one-quarter of the respondents demonstrated their dissatisfaction by switching to a competing product.*"

In an environment where service is lacking it is refreshing at WordPerfect Corporation to be able to provide a software support group whose basic purpose is to courteously and efficiently help customers use our products effectively.

This year the 1990 PC World Class Awards committee conducted a reader's poll for comments

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Customer service can be summed up in the following story (quoted from *Time magazine*)

For Harry Hapless, it was a rough day in the service economy. His car, a Fiasco 400, started sputtering on the highway, so Harry pulled into a gas station for help. "Sorry, no mechanics, only gas!" shouted the attendant. "How can you call this a service station?" yelled Harry. He went to the bank to get some emergency cash for a tow truck, only to find the automatic teller machine out of order, again. "Real nice service!" he muttered. Then Harry decided to use a credit card to buy a tool kit at the Cheapo discount store, but he couldn't find anyone to wait on him. "Service! Anyone, please! Help me!" was his cry.

It had been a trying day indeed. Harry thought as he rode a bus home, but at least he could look forward to a trip to Florida the following week with his wife, Harriet. That is, until Flyway Air called: "Sorry, Mr. Hapless. Due to our merger with Byway Air, your Florida flight has been canceled." Harry got so angry he was going to call the Federal Aviation Administration immediately. But just then his phone went dead no doubt because the phone system had been split up, he imagined. Well, that was the last straw. A few minutes later a wild-eyed Harry burst into the newsroom of his local newspaper.

"I've got a story for you!" he cried: "There is no more service in America!"

“We produce a good program and answer the telephone.”

about software support. WordPerfect Corporation's Customer Support received the recognition for the best service and support. *“It was amazing how many people used the free-form comments section to rave about WPCorp's support policies. I hope other vendors are paying attention those votes might do some real good”*, said Larry Wilson, PC World Class counting crew.

Software support receives ratings based on a subjective opinion gathered from end users, whereas, software programs receive ratings based on a variety of considerations. In consideration of the other side of the paradox, the software program, there are several issues that determine a good software program.

There are many lists of top selling software programs in the industry. The lists rank programs according to the number of copies shipped to stores and resellers in the week or according to rankings of performance according to certain comparison criteria. There are numerous comparisons which discuss strengths and weaknesses of various software products. In the area of word processing, for example, the following considerations are reviewed: productivity, reliability, ease of use, basic editing capabilities, proofing tools, mail merge, layout, style sheets, font/printer support, reference tools, import/export facilities, network, compatibility, speed, macros, feature richness, documentation, ease of learning, error handling, support policies, technical support, and value.

Reviewers have marveled at the ingenuity and creativity which have been invested in the high-power software products. From the top selling lists of software, we see the popularity of the products. From the technical comparisons, we find out about the features and the compatibility of the products. From the bench marks, we find out about the productivity of the products.

These objective comparisons help customers make informed choices as they purchase software products included in these product comparisons is information regarding support. For computer software users support is important. We have found that excellent support is a prerequisite. It has been a major factor in our success with WordPerfect.

Good support doesn't just happen. That may be the reason for the paradox. Good software does not automatically insure good support. Support

is something that requires great care, concern, planning, training, resources, monitoring and follow-through. At our corporation, we have developed our support program over the past ten years through continual effort and learning. We have come to understand the value of support in various departments, including advertising, marketing, development and public relations. People hear about good support and tell their associates. Dealers feel assurances concerning a well-supported product and confidently sell it to customers. Development engineers find out what customers want and what problems customers have, and enhance the software, accordingly. Customers in general have a good feeling and trust in an organization which is dedicated to service and is able to help people with their problems.

In our case the program and support have shared equally in gaining portions of the word processing market. Bill Howard of PC Magazine states, *“WordPerfect has climbed from about 25 or 30 percent market share ... to a 60-plus market share ... The most likely reason; unlimited toll-free support. WordPerfect plows a huge chunk of its revenues back in no questions-asked, all-questions-answered technical help. Others offer free support, some offer toll-free support; some offer toll-free, but nobody does it with the style and class of the people in the WordPerfect Organization.”*

A software package is purchased on the premise that it does what the manufacturer says it will. Confidence and value in the product is decreased when problems are encountered. The manufacturer not only needs to restore confidence in their product but also reconfirm that the customer made a good decision in purchasing the product. A manufacturer does this when a customer experiences exactly what they expected when they purchased the program — good support. Good support for a software program returns confidence. Exceptional support adds value.

The support concept in the early days of the computer industry is still the correct direction for a software manufacturer. Good technical support is a phone call away.

At a recent SPA Conference, Pete Peterson made a statement that simplifies the issue. The audience was addressed first by a software publisher who had just implemented several technological improvements to help the customer feel that they had made the correct choice in purchasing their product. It was Pete's turn to discuss his view of needed changes in support. Pete began his comments by saying, *“At WordPerfect Corporation we do things the old fashion way. We produce a good program and answer the telephone.”*

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PLANNING MEETING

June 10 (2nd Monday) at 7:30pm

The location

1670 Oak Avenue, Menlo Park

Help us to make decisions about the club. All members are welcome, and you don't have to be a club officer to get your views heard.

Q *How can I merge a style from another template in Word for Windows?*

Using the Format Define Styles Options command, you will find a button to Merge all styles from another template into the current document. Incoming styles will replace existing styles with the same name (but you'll get a warning first).

To merge just one or two styles (but not all) from another template, you use a whole different approach. Let's say you're writing a letter based on NORMAL.DOT, and you want to use a style you created in BUSLETR.DOT. Open any document that's based on BUSLETR. Find a paragraph that's formatted with the style you want and copy it to the clipboard. (Even copying just the paragraph mark at the end is enough.) Go back to your original letter and paste it in. As long as the incoming paragraph has a unique style name, that style is now a part of your current document. You can now delete the paragraph, and use the new style on other text. (If the style name already exists, however, the new style won't come in and the pasted paragraph will be re-formatted appropriately.)

Q *Since I discovered the ability to attach notes to cells in Excel, I've been taking full advantage of this feature. But how can I find them all quickly and read through each one? The Formula Note box lists them, but sometimes I need to see where they occur on the worksheet. Besides, it doesn't show the entire text of each note.*

Open the note window with Window Show Info, and arrange your windows on the screen with Window Arrange All. Reactivate the document window and use the Formula Select Special command. Make sure that Notes is selected and click OK. Every cell with a note is now selected. Pressing enter will then toggle you through each cell in your selection without disturbing it. You can read the notes in the note window one by one.

If you're using Excel 3.0, cells with notes attached can be distinguished by the small red dot in the upper right corner. If you don't see the dot, go to Options Workspace and turn on the Note Indicator.

P.S. You can also print cell notes in either version with File Print.

Q *I would like to be able to understand the long, complicated formula I see in the formula bar when I click on data in an Excel chart. Is it something I can manipulate and use to my advantage?*

You bet! Once you understand each "series formula," you can edit it to your heart's content. Here's all you need to know.

Each separate piece of data on your chart is called a data point. One or more related data points make up a data series. Here's an example: Let's say your worksheet has three columns of data labelled "Jan," "Feb," and "Mar," and you have three rows of numbers underneath labelled "Income," "Outgo," and "What's Left." The resulting chart will be laid out as follows: The category axis (also called the horizontal or X axis) will include the categories "Jan," "Feb," and "Mar." Each category will have three columns, or data points, above it. The first data point of each month makes up the Income data series. The second data point of each month makes up the Outgo data series, and so on. (The Chart Add Legend command will label them for you.) The value axis (also called the vertical or Y axis) displays the appropriate range of values used to plot each data point.

Following this example, I entered the month names in B1:D1, and the Income, Outgo, and What's Left labels in A2:A4. The data resides in cells B2:D4. When I chart the data in A1:D4, Excel creates one formula per data series. By clicking on any point in the first data series, the entire series becomes selected, and this appears in the formula bar:

```
=SERIES(Sheet1!$A$2,Sheet1!$B$1:$D$1,Sheet1!$B$2:$D$2,1)
```

The formula is read as follows:

```
=SERIES
function name
Sheet1!$A$2
name of data series (the label "Income")
Sheet1!$B$1:$D$1
category names ("Jan" "Feb" and "Mar")
Sheet1!$B$2:$D$2
values for this data series (the three points
for the Income series)
```

1
plot order (Income is the first data series)

The first three arguments (name, category, and values) are always preceded with the worksheet name and an exclamation.

And that's it! Like any other part of your worksheet, you can go in and edit this formula to change the way your chart is plotted.

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Send your questions on Microsoft and Windows products to :

The Express Train at the following station:

3655 Pruneridge Avenue,
No. 135, Santa Clara,
95051, (408) 243-5955.

X-RAYS AND YOUR COMPUTER DISK

Roland Wong, Sc.M.

**HOW TO SAVE
MONEY AND YOUR
BACK AT THE
SAME TIME.**

Have you purchased lead-lined pouches for your computer disks so that they won't be affected by the X-rays in airport scanners? Do you store your valued disks in leaded safes to protect them from cosmic ray degradation? Is the hard disk on your portable computer safe from the X-rays in the airport scanner? Answers to these questions and much more are yours for reading this article.

DISCUSSION

Radiation is feared by most people in the United States, though the fear is mostly unfounded. It is also commonly thought that ionizing radiation (X-rays, alpha particles, beta particles and gamma rays) are harmful to computer disks. Both concepts are unfounded. I would like to show members of our user group that X-rays do little if anything to damage a computer disk and the information on it.

If this article were to be submitted to a professional journal for publication it would probably be titled "The Effects of Lightly Filtered X-Rays on Magnetic Storage Media". However, since it is being presented in a computer user's group newsletter, that stuffy title would have to be expanded and explained.

To understand the subtleties of this experiment, some expansion of the technical details is necessary. First, a lightly filtered beam of X-rays was used. This, in conjunction with a low generating energy (60kVp is relatively low), produces rays which would do the most damage to anything within the beam. A more energetic beam would likely pass through the object, and X-rays passing through do no harm to the subject, since it is ray absorption which produces harm. The unit of X-ray absorption is the rad, the radiation absorbed dose. A millirad, abbreviated mrad, is 1/1000 of a rad.

The physical mechanism used by the equipment to generate X-rays is called brehmstrahlung, which means braking (or stopping) radiation in German. In this case energy is given to an electron. This electron is slammed against a metallic target and X-rays are generated by the braking of the electron to rest. This mechanism creates X-rays with a spectrum of energies, with the highest energy of any X-ray photon being limited to the highest amount of energy given to the electron which produced it.

The radiation with the lower energy is almost always absorbed by objects in its beam. If the X-ray beam is being used to make radiographs, then the lower energy X-rays seldom, if ever, reach the film. All the radiation from the low-energy X-rays would be absorbed by the object in the beam (e.g., you, the patient), and this would result in an unnecessarily absorbed dose of radiation.

For these reasons national standards have been set dictating that filters be placed in the beam between the generator and the object (or patient) to block out the lower energy radiation that would otherwise give the patient useless radiation exposure.

However, because the floppy disk that I was working on is extremely thin, I used a beam of low energy radiation with a minimum of filtration to emphasize the absorption of radiation by such a thin target.

The amount of radiation delivered to the disk is also an important quantity. Consider that the average radiation dose from a chest X-ray is approximately 20 mrad. Other radiographic procedures of a patient's torso usually give more exposure, in some cases as high as 1,000 mrad. Very high dose procedures can give a patient as much as 10,000 mrad. High-speed photographic film, (ISO 1000 to 3000), which is most sensitive to radiation, must be passed through airport scanners several times before any effect is seen. The computer disks that I exposed received 5,000 mrad.

The dose to luggage being scanned in an airport, in contrast, is in the order of 1 mrad, which means that you'd have to take 2,500 round trips (if you could stand that much airline food) before it would reach the strength I used.

THE EXPERIMENT

My experiment was relatively simple. I prepared two 360K 5¼" disks by copying material ranging from simple ASCII files to Lotus Spreadsheets to executable program files onto them. One disk was kept as a control, while the other was subjected to 5,000 mrad of X-rays generated at 60kVp with only 0.5mm A1 filtration. Both disks were then checked with the Disk Test from Norton Utilities V4.5 using the /D option. They were also subsequently tested with the Diskscan utility from PCMagazine Utilities. Neither disk was found to have any determinable damage, either physically or electrically.

FINDINGS

1. X-ray radiation does little, if any, harm to computer disks.
2. Save your money and your back. Pack an extra pair of socks instead of the leaded pouches
3. Although radiation may be used to sterilize your disks and your computer, it has no effect on computer viruses

INSTALL

- Your Modem in Your Computer
- ProComm on Your Hard Disk
- Configure and Demonstrate Use
- Labour Charge of \$35

BOB BOTTINI

(415) 369-2086

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IBM-PC Users Group.

THE SPAUG RESOURCE CENTER

This is a list of club members who have volunteered their services. If anyone would like their name added to this list, please get in touch with Paul Staley or Jan Altman.

OFFICERS

President Paul Staley (415) 493-1582
 Vice President Jan Altman (408) 243-5955
 ASSU Representative Alex McMillan (415) 322-4543

MANAGERS

Bulletin Board Sysop Bob Bottini (415) 369-2086
 Financial Manager Bev Altman (415) 329-8252
 Librarian - Public Domain Software Les Weil (415) 321-5541
 Newsletter Editor Tony Allen (408) 739-2953

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 Foxbase Marie Hooper (415) 325-1206
 Windows Products Jan Altman (408) 243-5955
 R:Base Larry Mehl (415) 326-6037
 Lotus 1-2-3 Larry Mehl (415) 326-6037
 Symphony Sally See (415) 941-1378

LANGUAGES

C John Watson (415) 325-7632
 Fortran John Watson (415) 325-7632
 Pascal John Watson (415) 325-7632
 Smalltalk John Watson (415) 325-7632
 QuickBasic Don Baird (415) 365-6822

CLUB EVENTS IN JUNE

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

June 10th Second Monday - PLANNING MEETING

7:30 PM Beverly Altman, (415) 329-8252 or Paul Staley, (415) 293-1582

June 12th The **WORD FOR WINDOWS SIG** meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm to talk about Word for Windows and general Windows issues. On Wednesday, June 12th, we will discuss:

"Section Formatting"

Location is Infotec Training Institute, Techmart, 5201 Great America Parkway, Suite 254, Santa Clara. The group is led by Jan Altman, a certified trainer in Word for Windows.

For more information, please call Jan at (408) 243-5955.

June 24th The **MICROSOFT WORD FOR DOS SIG** meets the fourth Monday of each month at 7:30 pm. The group alternates between discussions of Word 5.0 and Word 5.5. On Monday, June 24th, we will discuss:

"Multiple Windows in Word 5.5"

Location is Infotec Training Institute, Techmart, 5201 Great America Parkway, Suite 254, Santa Clara.

For more information, please call Harold Santos at (415) 573-8786

June 26th Last Wednesday - GENERAL MEETING

7:30 PM Turing Auditorium, Polya Hall, Stanford University

MAY MEETING

*Last Wednesday:
May 29th, 7.30pm
at Turing Auditorium*

MEET THE MAN WITH HIS FINGER ON THE PULSE OF SILICON VALLEY

Ever wondered how computers are used in investigative reporting?

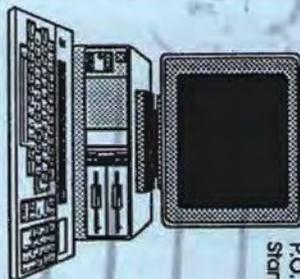
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RORY J. O'CONNOR
 Computing Editor of
 the San Jose Mercury
 News

**The Stanford/Palo Alto
PC Users Group**

P.O. Box 3738
Stanford, CA 94309



CLUB INFORMATION

Meetings

Paul Staley
(415) 493-1582

Membership

Beverly Altman
(415) 329-8252

\$25/year (Students \$10)

Bulletin Board

Newsletter

(415) 321-4497
Tony Allen
(408) 739-2953

THE MAY MEETING

Last Wednesday: May 29th, 7.30pm at Turing Auditorium

**MEET THE MAN WITH HIS FINGER ON THE
PULSE OF SILICON VALLEY**

Ever wondered how computers are used in
investigative reporting?

Intrigued about future trends in computing?

Learn this and more from:

**Rory J. O'Connor, the Computing Editor of
the San Jose Mercury News**