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VOLUME 12

NUMBER 4

APRIL 1994 ✓ it out: CD-ROM - Gotta have it ? Pages

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SPAUG is pleased to bring to you
Wednesday, April 27th 7:30 pm
at Varian, Bldg. 7 Auditorium

BORLAND'S
PRESENTATION OF
"Borland Office"



PRESIDENT'S PIECE

Let's Do the .WAV

I'm working on an "At[t]ach" command for this newsletter so you can hear all the Club news from the live source. We could publish it on disk with the Adobe Acrobat reader technology. Kind of a "click" on the Jan icon and we be "Word Rapping."

As members who attended the last General Meeting learned, Claris Corp. was unable to attend due to a lack of presentation equipment. However, Charlie Wiener, Club member and owner of Computers-At-Large, generously agreed to star in a CD-ROM presentation. Not only did we journey through the hardware side but he had a \$5 CD-ROM disk loaded with the latest shareware. That disk sure killed the Disk-of-the-Month sales. Share the profits? Yes, he did with the Club. I had previously faxed in my CD-ROM disks order. I wanted to preview the CICA Windows and Simtel MSDOS disks. These disks are published quarterly with their source being the Internet Archives. The disks have the latest ASP (Assoc. of Shareware Pros) programs. The Windows disk, 3000 programs, is planned to be first installed on the new SPAUG BBS Toshiba 3401 CD-ROM drive. The Planning Committee has allocated the equipment funds. So we are moving forward with that project. A BIG THANK YOU for all the raffle donations which made this possible.

This issue of PrintScreen is the first to be produced under the new Newsletter Publishing Group (NPG). Larry Weinberg and I have formed an editorial committee to solicit articles and direct the publication. The production services are headed by Mark Christopher with distribution led by Jim Bailey. Graphic Artists are Don Campbell and Ester Felix. Spiritual Guidance is by Rick Altman, Tony Allen and Jennifer Wildman. The vision is to create an informative newsletter and have fun producing it. We hope you have fun reading it. Join us in this vision, volunteer for a committee.

Larry Weinberg has volunteered to handle the Disk-of-the-Month program.

Burns Searfoss has volunteered to head the Raffle Promotions Committee. At the March General Meeting he stimulated interest to the point that Beverly was swamped with ticket sales.

Paul Dodd from Borland returns to the April General Meeting. We should be able to get the inside story on Corporate Buy-Outs and software support. His topic is "Power Computing with Borland Office." A free raffle will include the Borland Office package.

David Derry from Microsoft called me to confirm their May 25th presentation date. They will be discussing Windows technology, DOS, upgrades, CD-ROM titles, MS Office and anything else on which we don't have to sign a nondisclosure form.

The Third Annual Pledge Dinner is planned for June 1st. Last year we had a great time, meeting members and swapping stories. This year, Jan Altman has volunteered to plan the fun games. A Snapple of wit and humor to levitate the evening's events.

The Software Review Committee has two new programs for members who can share their experiences in print. Quicken for Windows and More After Dark (requires After Dark 2.0+) are available for review. Larry Weinberg (415) 969-2292 is the contact for these programs.

SPAUG Officer Elections are once again upon us. The April General Meeting will witness members destined for their fifteen minutes of glory sworn into the Planning Committee Inner Circle. One of the responsibilities of an Officer is to determine who will bring cookies to the Planning Meeting.

Results from the last SPAUG Membership Survey (March General Meeting) showed that 98% of the attending members have modems and 95% read PrintScreen.

See you on the 27th!

Brian



Once upon a midnight dreary, fingers cramped and vision bleary,
System manuals piled high and wasted paper on the floor,
longing for the warmth of bed sheets, still I sat there, doing spreadsheets:
Having reached the bottom line, I took a floppy from the drawer.
Typing with a steady hand, I then invoked the SAVE command,
but got instead a reprimand: it read "Abort, Retry, Ignore."

AUCTION ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Please submit all bids to Beverly Altman ☎ (415) 329-8252

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CD-ROM DRIVES - GOTTA HAVE IT ?

CD-ROM Drives

Compiled by Larry Weinberg



In the January 2 and January 9, 1994 issues of the San Jose Mercury, Phillip Robinson wrote two very informative articles to serve as a guide for those thinking of buying a CD-ROM. I recommend these articles for their easily understood definitions and conciseness. Check latest prices before buying.

I found it helpful to tabulate some of the things he mentioned and add some missing specifications. All of the drives listed below are internal, double speed and SCSI(except Sony). There are other good candidates and this table is not supposed to be restrictive.

The least cost drive other than the Sony, which has a proprietary card, is the Plextor 3078 (this is Robinson's favorite).

The Sony is the cheapest if you don't care about the card and photo CD. Using Robinson's criteria for access time(350 ms is good and 250 ms is great) all the drives are acceptable. Prices are a mix from Fry's and NCA.

The Media Vision Fusion Double 16 seems like a good buy. The price has dropped from \$399 at Fry's on 3/20/94 to \$329 at NCA and Access on 3/27/94. This is may be due to Media Visions financial problems. Creative Labs may have comparable kits.

Drive	Components				Media Vision Kits	
	Toshiba	Plextor	Chinon	Sony	Fusion Pro 16	Double 16 Multimedia
	3401	3078	535	33A	NEC 55J	NEC 84JDI
Access time (ms)	200	240	280	320	320	250
Transfer rate (Kb/sec)	330	330	300	300	300	300
Multisession photo CD	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Caddy	Y	Y	?	?	?	?
Cache buffer (Kb)	256	?	256	?	?	?
Cost	\$339	\$289	\$329	\$199		
Card cost (mid-range all 16-bit)	\$129	\$129	\$129	*1	*2	*2
Speaker (ave quality)	\$30	\$30	\$30	\$30	incl.	incl.
Titles (7)	\$79	\$79	\$79	\$79	incl.	incl.
Total Cost	\$577	\$527	\$567	\$308	\$329	\$449


Notes:

1. Access time is millisecs to find stuff on disk (important)
2. Transport rate is how fast drive moves stuff from disk to computer
3. All probably of equal quality construction
4. All should be acceptable to general user

*1 Proprietary

*2 Pro Audio spectrum


To CD or Not CD
Bob Reiser, WPCUG



My first encounter with the new CD-ROM technology told me to avoid it like the plague. A year and a half ago, when I investigated buying one, I saw a mass of conflicting technologies, standards, non-standards, weird interfaces, and the warnings, "Beware -- the drive you buy may not work with your computer" Or, "The CD software you buy may not work on your drive." That was enough; I closed the book and told myself 'some-day.'

But this Spring, something happened. "With an accepted operating standard finally in place, and sales soaring. The drives themselves began to drop in price. Suddenly CD ROM drives and programs were blooming like petunias on a hot day! Before I knew it, I myself had plunked down \$199 for my own no-frills, MPC Compliant (that's the operating standard), Mitsumi drive, and began to put together my own CD library. I haven't regretted it a bit.

Books On Disk.




I had to try something on my new toy, and some of these books on disk were cheap. So, for less than 20 bucks I bought Pedro Meyer's beautiful I Photograph to Remember, put out by The Voyager Company. Imagine a sensitive photo book, several cuts above the average coffee table volume, with music and narration by the photographer. The effect is overwhelming -- A cross between a **computer program, and an interactive television program.** I may not have thought that you wanted to shell out \$20 for a talking book, but it is well worth the experience. This kind of interactive audio and visual book may be just the beginning of a true revolution in publishing.

Reference on Disk

Then I moved on to the Microsoft and Compton's mother lode -- reference works on disk. I had tried reference works before. Once, in exchange for 20 mega-bytes of hard disk space, I had a dictionary, almanac, and book of quotations more or less hooked into my word processor by macros. After a month, I found that the two times that I used it was not worth the real estate it took up. So I erased it.

But now my drought is over. Microsoft Bookshelf, which can be used by itself or as an integral part of Word for Windows 2, starts out by displaying an actual living bookshelf--dictionary, atlas, short encyclopedia, Bartlett Quotations, World Almanac, etc.



Click on any book and you are in it. Call up the Almanac, for example. In five seconds you have a hot button index along the left side of the screen. You can look up anything from business to sports to area codes. Want to investigate sports? A click takes you to sports 1991. From the Olympic Games to College basketball. Who held the record in the most rebounds? Click, click -- Cheekily el LSU, of course, with 395. That took two seconds to look up.

Sick of sports? Try the Atlas. Click-- a world map. Click -- a map of the US. Click -- a map of Wisconsin. Click -- the state flag. Click - you are hot linked into the Encyclopedia and the Almanac

for all the information your want, from the state song to the GNP. Click, click, click -- I am at Bartlett's Quotations now, looking at T. S. Eliot and listening to him read his Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. I can clip the text or embed the picture and the voice in my document if I like. Click -- I find 132 quotations for "freedom" or 7 quotes for 'ducks', including "He was so benevolent, so merciful, that he would hold an umbrella over a duck caught in a rain shower." And because most of the information is on my CD disk, My Microsoft Bookshelf takes up less than a megabyte and a half of my hard disk.

If I need more information, I can bring out the big guns, Microsoft Encarta or Compton's Encyclopedia, the world on a disk. These are truly remarkable programs. You can find almost any subject within seconds. For a report my son needed info on "nullification." We typed in the search word, found 3 pages of information, and several dozen additional cross references, from "tariff and nullification" to "Henry Clay and Nullification." Encarta has a wonderful richness of pictures, animation, video and audio clips, all of which you can copy, print, or embed right in your document. You may not realize it, but embedded in this document is ten seconds of Ud music. A Ud is a Turkish cousin of the lute according to Encarta.

Perhaps the greatest glory of using a CD encyclopedia is the joy of hypertext. Looking up a cross reference in a paper-based encyclopedia involves putting aside your present volume, picking up volume 14 searching out the new information, finding whether or not it is useful, and then returning to the original article in volume 6. No mo! On an electronic encyclopedia, I click on a hot word (usual bold faced), and I am at the cross reference. If it is useful, I save it. Then click again, I am back at my original article. I can repeat the process again and again, sucking the information that I need into my notes, and then, revising and rearranging them later. My thirteen year old son is even doing research and (almost) enjoying it.

Without a CD-ROM, 20 volumes of information, plus audio and video clips would take up several hard drives on my computer. But, with most of the information on disk, the entire encyclopedia uses about three megabytes of my Western Digital.

The glories of CD go on and on. Microsoft has an interactive Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and Cinemania, a movie buff's source book on disk. Compton's weighs in with a Multimedia History of Jazz. Both of these deserve more space than I can give them this month. I am also busy learning Spanish from my CD ROM. Can it be done? Maybe with the help of Tequila?

Don't just sit there on your hard drive !!

Share your ideas at the next planning meeting, May 4, 1994 (1st Wednesday) at 7:30 p.m.

1670 Oak Avenue, Menlo Park

All members are WELCOME. You don't have to be a club officer to attend.

1994 is the year to have a CD-ROM drive.

CD-ROM drives are now cheap enough and useful enough to be included in every new desktop computer. The drives can cost as little as \$150. They can't replace hard disks or floppies because they can't record information. But each CD-ROM you slip into a CD-ROM drive - much as you slip audio Compact Discs into a boom box - can hold five hundred times as much as a typical floppy disk. That means they have the room for entire libraries of text.

Better yet, they can also store huge programs, animated pictures, photographs, stereo sounds and even video - stuff that wouldn't fit on a floppy and would choke your hard disk. This means a CD-ROM drive can open your computer not only to fascinating and fun education and games programs, but to far more serious business such as reference works (dictionaries, encyclopedias, quote compendiums), clip-art collections (including video and audio) and data dumps (financial reports, market surveys, mailing lists).

There are three ways to get a CD-ROM drive. You can buy a new computer with a built-in drive. You can buy a CD-ROM drive and install it yourself. Or you can buy a "multimedia kit" that includes a CD-ROM drive, a sound board and maybe a set of speakers, along with some multimedia software.

The easiest way is to buy a new desktop computer with a CD-ROM drive. That way you'll get a good price on the drive (the computer maker buys in huge volume), and you don't have to know anything about installation of hardware or software, which I can tell you from personal experience is neither obvious nor easy. There are plenty of PC-compatible and Macintosh models available with CD-ROM

drives, and they'll also have the memory and processor power to keep up with the latest programs that can exercise those drives.

These are two things to ask about when buying a built-in CD-ROM drive (most built-in drives meet these following standards, but you should ask to make sure):

1. What's the transfer rate?

That is, how fast does the drive move stuff from the disk to the computer? Is it single-speed, double-speed, or triple-speed? Single-speed drives are the cheapest but they only move 150k of information per second. (Also referred to as 150 KBps for Kilobytes per second.) That's fine if you won't use multimedia, just reading CD-ROMs with financial data, text dictionaries and the like. But think carefully - double-speed doesn't cost much more and you may soon regret not having multimedia for adding a video clip to that presentation.

Double-speed, which can move 300k of information per second from the disk to computer, is necessary for multimedia. Without it sound stutters, animation jerks and video stumbles. Triple-speed is the latest. It cost more, but serious game players and multimedia fans will want it for the larger video windows on screen, more colors in the video, and smoother synchronized sound.

2. What's the average access time? This measures not how much information the disk can provide per second but how long it takes the disk to find information when your program asks for it. This is measured in milliseconds - thousandths of a second. A slow CD-ROM drive takes 500ms to 1000ms to find something; a fast drive takes only 300ms or less. That 500ms or so difference may not sound like much, but added up time after time after time it means tapping your fingers and waiting a second or two every time your program asks another question of the disk. You'll notice - and you'll hate the wait.

There are also less vital questions to ask, like: "Is the drive "Photo CD Multisession compatible"?"

Photo CD is Kodak's new method of putting photographs on CD-ROMs. You can shoot pictures with a typical camera, then when developing ask not only for prints but for a CD-ROM of the shots. You can then drop this CD-ROM into pretty much any drive (most support photo CD now - but you should make sure) and see the pictures on your computer screen. Then you can make changes to them, index them

and print them. Next time you shoot a roll of film you can get another CD-ROM, or you can take this CD-ROM back to the lab and ask for the new pictures to be added to it. The "XA" specification you'll sometimes read about is closely related to, but not always the same thing as, Multisession ability.

Don't worry about the "MPC compatibility" advertised for many drives. The MPC (Multimedia PC) specification was supposed to help you know when a PC-compatible was equipped to run official MPC-stamped multimedia programs. This includes not only a ROM drive

but also a sound board and related software. The CD-ROM drive in the first version of MPC needed only a 1000ms access time at single-speed transfer. That's pitifully weak, nothing you'd really want for multimedia.

The 1993 MPC Level 2 standard demands a Multisession, XA-ready, double-speed CD-ROM drive. That's more realistic, but only restates the obvious: get at least double-speed for multimedia and ask about Multisession ability.

RESUME REFERRAL SERVICE

DICK HARDING
20 WILLOW ROAD #21
MENLO, CA 94025
(415) 322-9645

This service is free to SPAUG members. Dick shares your resume with local companies who are looking for new employees. For info, call Dick at the number above.

"ASCEND 4.0 for Windows by Franklin Quest"

a review by Barry A. Smith

ASCEND produced an immediate surprise since included are four audio cassette tapes suggesting that this review may take quite some time. To simplify matters, I ignored the tapes, worthy though they may be, and the 68 page Franklin Day Planner System book that accompanies them. Next, I spotted two 3.5" disks (this may not be so overwhelming after all), a 335 page user manual (wrong!), yours and theirs registration cards and a 5.25" disk request form.

It's time to insert the disk labeled One and look around for the "quick start" card...surprise, there isn't one. The manual must be read, as though they planned it this way. It is clear and concise and the installation is fast and easy. Another surprise, ASCEND locks up after 60 days unless the serial number and key number are entered. I've simply never encountered this. It's not a problem: however, since the numbers are clearly labeled on the registration cards.

ASCEND provides a colorful user interface with the familiar Menu Bar of drop down menus (File, Edit, Window, Options, Goto, View and Help) just above a Main Tool Bar (a calendar motif used quite effectively) and twelve brightly colored icons (down the right side of screen straight from the disk but configurable to the top, bottom, left or floating at your preference). ASCEND is clearly Windows worthy in its look and feel.

Clicking around the screen leads to the discovery that ASCEND comes with Demo Data and a five lesson, 58 page tutorial. Pausing briefly to load the Demo Data, I realize that more of the manual must be read since the demo is off line. What follows is a summary of only some of the features illustrated by the Tutorial since Franklin Quest has done a fine job developing flexibility and user defined configurability.

Very simply, Lesson 1 of the tutorial provides the ASCEND overview.

Very much less simply, Lesson 2 is ambitiously titled "Planning Your Life." This is an introduction to the Value and Goals icon, a purple pyramid on a yellow background and clearly a clever tie in to the software title. After extolling the virtues of Ben Franklin, ASCEND humbly leads you through a goal setting session starting with Values and cascading down through Long Range Goals, Intermediate Goals and Daily Tasks. Having fully programmed your life, you are then encouraged to wax philosophically on your thoughts, feelings and emotions in your Journal. This icon, a Quill and Inkwell, may be hidden by those users bashful about their personal thoughts but compelled to express them anyway.

Lesson 3 is devoted to "Planning Your Day"...this is starting to be much more consistent with my expectations of a PIM. A 24 hour, 15 minute graduated Appointment Schedule is accessed by a click on an Alarm Clock icon. Appointments are easily scheduled, either one time or as recurring events, and notes can be appended to the schedule. Several handy buttons are available in the Notes sections including separate time and date stamps. Particularly handy is a find function that retrieves essential data such as phone numbers, address, etc. for you. With a thorough data base, this would be quite useful, particularly since an auto dialer is provided as well. Alarms and Advance . Alarms can be set to notify you several times for "can't be missed" entries. The ABC icon lets you enter tasks to your Prioritized Daily Task List and allows them to be prioritized ABCD quite naturally. Items can be easily dragged and dropped from the Task List to the Appointment Schedule and vice versa. Separate Task Lists can be created for Personal and several other categories including a Master Task List. A number of different status codes can be assigned to individual tasks as can estimated and actual times. Many statistics and graphs of time usage can also be created. You can analyze your time in as much detail and depth as you have time to devote to such analysis. ASCEND is very thorough in allowing you to search, index, list, and print by the day, week or month.

Lesson 4 addresses "Personal Information Management". Addresses and phone numbers are accessed by clicking on the Red Telephone icon that then displays a basic phone book model. An expanded data Filter sheet allows for notes, key words, etc.; however, only five phone numbers per data sheet are allowed. For some people this will be inadequate. An icon labeled Red Tab provides for an endless variety of list limited only to the user's imagination. Some examples suggested include projects, books to read, gifts, etc. A Turbo icon provides for things such as summaries of magazine articles, reports to give your boss, phrases you want to remember, etc. An in/out basket is the analogy used by Franklin. A separate Q icon is for quotations and, of course, good old Ben Franklin had many of those. Lastly, a special icon for Special Days provides you'll never forget those anniversaries, birthdays, reunions, and holidays.

Lesson 5 deals with "Contact Information Management". This is accomplished primarily by linking tasks, calls, and appointments to individual contacts and producing a Contact History window. The reports generate the time spent on individual tasks, calls and appointments. Contact Information Management is automatic if you enter the events.

Summary: ASCEND is a feature rich PIM with a primary focus on time management. It is industrial strength; an attempt at mastery on opening may overwhelm a user. Like most applications, you do need to learn ASCEND's language and terminology to thoroughly learn how to use it. Elements of ASCEND are, however, intuitive, flexible and modular allowing you to use as much or as little as you like. If ASCEND's style appeals to you enough to enjoy using it, then you'll find its graphics and flexibility worth your effort.

Minimum System Requirements to run ASCEND 4.0 for Windows?

- Microsoft Windows 3.0 or later version. (Version 3.1 highly recommended!).
 - DOS 3.1 or later version.
 - An IBM Compatible PC (80286 microprocessor or higher).
 - EGA, VGA, Hercules graphics card or compatible video graphics adapter and monitor.
 - 2 Megabyte of RAM (3MB or more is recommended for improved performance).
 - One 1.2MB 5.25" diskette drive or 1.44MB 3.5" diskette drive.
 - A Hard Drive with at least 2.5MB of free disk space after Windows has been installed.
 - A printer compatible with Windows 3.0 or higher.
 - A mouse supported by Windows is highly recommended.
 - A Hayes compatible modem supported by Windows to use "Auto Dial" feature.
-
- Franklin Quest Co.
 - South Decker Lake Blvd.
 - Salt Lake City, UT 84119
-
- ASCEND Technical Support 801-975-9999 M-F 6:00 am to 6:00 p.m. MST
 - or 24 Hour Fax 801-975-9995
-
- For Marketing Information contact Franklin's Marketing Department at
 - or 801-975-9992. Mention SPAUG for User Group Pricing.

C-Menu * System Menuing Software v4.0

Software review by Mark Christopher

Many years ago I stepped out from behind my Mac to learn DOS. The last thing on my mind was a menuing system. As a matter of fact, I felt like I owed it to myself to experience the fine art of typing DOS commands without getting error messages. But as my wife and daughter became more interested in this new computer with a color monitor (the Mac was mono), I found it necessary to spare them the burden of the C:\ prompt.

Like many, I turned to ANSI with error trapping and utility COM files in a BATCH directory. Yesterday I moved all those files to a floppy (so I could show my grandkids all the neat work I did) and loaded C-Menu.

C-Menu, with it's clean (VGA 640x480) graphical user interface, complete mouse support, and color choices, resembles a Windows(R) application. It can produce sub-menus (or folders), password protect files, take arguments if needed to run a program, and run all your programs in real or protected mode, all without restricting the number of entries or menus.

The main menu is really just it's own folder, as are the submenus you create. With the option of sub-menus (folders), programs can be separated, i.e. Word Processing, Database, Spreadsheet, Communications, Utilities, general stuff, etc.

By default, C-Menu starts in the main menu (makes sense!!), so when adding programs make sure you are in the right folder or create the one you need. Program set-up starts with naming that

program (Lotus, WordPerfect, Welltris, etc.), choosing the DOS directory (or sub) it is located on your hard drive, then selecting the executable program file. DOS directories and program files are listed by C-Menu, so it's just a matter of scrolling through and highlighting them with your mouse. Next, arguments can be added if needed, and password protection. Click the <Done> button and the program is added. The configuration was easy and includes adding, editing, deleting, sorting of C-Menu entries and sub-menus, system date/time, and screen saver.

With the registered version, you get a data file for storing names, addresses, and phone numbers. As convenient as this is, the options to use this data, like Print or Dial, were non-existent. Even though the data file could really be improved, the version 4.0 as a whole is still a real keeper.

System Requirements: IBM PC, XT, AT, PS/2 or compatible
running DOS v3.0 or higher.
640k RAM Installed
VGA Card
100% Microsoft Compatible Mouse recommended
Hard Drive recommended

C-Vision Software
5866 Via Cuesta Drive
El Paso, Texas 79912-6608
Voice: (915) 833-6778

CompuServe: 72223,2016

PC-Publisher -- Software Review by Mark Christopher

When I first ran across PC-Publisher I thought I was getting into word processing or maybe Desktop Publishing, but in fact, it is a neat little program that makes text files into fully executable EXE files.

On the way to producing your EXE file, a title (optional) can be given which is put at the header. Three shell options are given. Shell 1 gives you a scrolling window without mouse, menu, search, or print options. Shell 1 is included in the unregistered version. This is good for a so-called "read only" file for instructions or newsletters. In Shell 2, mouse support, a pull-down menu and word search are added. And Shell 3 adds the print option. Shell 2 and 3 come with registered versions.

Colors can be changed for the border (which is also the color of the text), and background. Choosing the text file you are going to compile is not limited to just one file. Multiple text files can be compiled into one EXE by using the + parameter. Name the new EXE file, preview it to make sure the colors don't clash with the boss's tie, choose "BUILD EXE" and in about 5 seconds your finished.

Simply put, you have a text file that comes with it's own reader. No more shelling to edit or to your favorite text reader. The applications are endless for those who work with or produce text files, and by using extended character codes, you can really dress up your presentation.

Be a little cautious with the word processor you use to produce text files. Many add formatting or escape codes. For PC-Publisher to do it's thing, the file should be pure as the driven snow. No yellow snow allowed.

Evaluation copy comes with Shell 1 only. The registered version includes Shell 1, 2, and 3.

PC Publisher * Electronic Publishing System

Relative Software Innovations

1515 N. Town East Blvd. #138

Mesquite, Texas 75150

Phone/Fax (214) 681-8131 CIS: 73611,127

Support: BBS America (214) 680-3406

TALK

TALK

The Tragedy of the Computing Underprivileged

by Rick & Rebecca Altman

We want to start by saying that we take no pride in identifying ourselves as part of computing's upper class. Nor do we think we are blessed with any special skills that place us in a higher strata of PC users. By our measure, the one component that places us there and excludes hundreds--no, thousands--of others in the publishing and graphics communities is the relatively unspectacular product called the modem.

Forget about the information highway nonsense that we're already tired of hearing about--we're talking about opportunities that are available to us now. We're talking about instant access to information today. We're talking about electronic data transfer and file exchange that is already a global phenomenon. We're talking e-mail.

We use the term loosely--not as a means for company employees to communicate--but as the means for anybody to communicate with anybody. The failure to take advantage of modern communication methods, even at their most basic, can truly separate the haves and have nots in our community.

As publishers and publishing consultants, we have enough examples just from our clients to fill a book about PC users who are hampered because they don't know their way around telecommunications software, have never logged onto a bulletin board before, or unbelievably, don't own a modem. At the risk of offending some of our own clients, they make up the underprivileged class of computer users.

Just Overnight It

Let's start with how much money they waste. A recent client of ours wanted us to pick up on a project left in mid-production by a departing employee. We were to complete work on a two-page spread for a quarterly publication, and they wanted to send us a print-out of the work done so far. "Do you have a CompuServe address or do you want to just dial up our bulletin board?" we asked. "Oh, we'll just use our Federal Express account." Never mind that it took 24 hours instead of one minute, the oversized document also required \$22.50 to package. Estimated cost to e-mail us the data file: \$0.17 in telephone charges. When it came time to show the clients our efforts, they proudly gave us their FedEx number.

Just Drive It There

The clients with the fat FedEx account were lucky--they didn't have emergency deadlines. Another electronically-challenged client that did have a time crunch was forced to get in the car and drive to us a collection of data files that would have required less than five minutes of connect time. And that client was lucky--he operated in the same region as us, making possible the drastic measure of diskette transport. Our clients who are in other parts of the country (and in two cases, another continent) know the one ingredient that makes the relationship work: electronic data exchange. We take it for granted as much as we do the fact that each uses a DOS system. For a recent editing contract that we sought to fill, we turned down an otherwise qualified candidate because she did not have e-mail experience nor the willingness to acquire it. As far as we are concerned, knowing how to dial up a bulletin board is as important a job skill for a technical editor as knowing on which side of the quote mark to place the comma.

Compress Data? You Mean Write Less??

Our next tale of woe comes from a new PageMaker user who was troubled by the new Panose font substitution in PageMaker 5.0. Her advertising layouts, replete with 24-bit color images, were due at the agency in 36 hours. She had a modem, but had never heard of PKZIP before. She couldn't afford the time of an overnight courier so she sent the file to our CompuServe address...uncompressed. Sixty-five minutes, 785K, and who knows how many dollars later, we opened her publication file on our system.

We didn't have the heart to tell her that her file zipped down to 82K and could have been transferred in about 90 seconds.

And finally, there is the man who thought that he was enjoying the latest in technology when he used his fax card to send us a 15-page document from Ventura Publisher. Of course, it made its way into our offices as 15 curled-up pages; he thought that, because it came from his computer, it would appear on our end as a disk file.

We normally wouldn't make a point of sharing other users' miseries in public, but we want to be clear that we are not calling into question these people's intelligence or the particular skills that they bring to their professions. They are all extremely competent designers, writers, editors, and/or publishers. But as information becomes increasingly accessible, and the demands for its access more and more immediate, their handicap is as serious as incompetence. Ten years ago, service bureaus who did not make the switch to desktop-driven systems are today out of business. Likewise, those designers, illustrators, and publishers who don't utilize the electronic link will find their practices in jeopardy.

Few sects of the community benefit from electronic data transfer the way that publishing and graphics do. Huge full-color images can be compressed and transmitted with ease, PostScript files can describe published pages on the other side of the planet, and users with common interest can congregate on electronic forums such as America OnLine, CompuServe, and Prodigy.

So why are so many users in the dark about modern communication? It's not as if it requires a gigantic leap of skill or knowledge. If you can install typefaces into your system or perform a text wrap, you can surely dial up a bulletin board or send a collection of zipped TIFF images. Part of the blame must go to the users themselves, many of whom simply won't take the time to learn ("that's an MIS issue," remarked one, with a hint of indignation). But an equal or greater share of the blame we would heap upon software and platform developers for not making telecommunications more fundamental to one's computing experience.

Telecommunications should be an integral part of Windows, and we're not talking about that pathetic little Terminal program. We should be able to pull down the File menu and choose Send to Mailbox, or Create Compressed PostScript file. What's more, it's time for all PCs to ship with a 14,400 fax/modem as standard equipment. This same PC should ship with a CD player instead of a 5 1/4 drive, but that's another column.

Electronic file transfer must become as automatic to modern-day users as formatting a diskette. Otherwise, they will lose a critical competitive advantage, regardless of how skilled in the arts they might be.

Write to Rick and Becky by fax (408-252-5448) or CompuServe (72341,1714). For the latest news on Rick's books, seminars, or annual Conferences, call his hotline at (408) 252-5586.

PLEASE WELCOME

the following new member

Jess Kanarek

THANKS to renewing members

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Phil Harsh

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Resource Center	Rich Madden	[408] 253-2075

SPAUG members are encouraged to make themselves available to other members to answer questions about hardware or software. Your area may be general or specialized. If you are willing to have your name added to this list, please contact the Resource Center Manager, Rich Madden at [408] 253-2075.

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CLUB INFORMATION

Meetings	Cookie Cook	[415] 282-0474
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\$35 per year		
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This months meeting includes a SOFTWARE RAFFLE

Freelance for Windows	 The Lotus Graphics Program
Quickbooks for DOS	 Small Business Bookkeeping
Virtual Monitors	 Desktop expansion for Windows
X-Wing	 Space Combat Simulator
Word 6 for Dummies	 Book
OS/2 Guide	 Book

(Next Month -- **MICROSOFT CORP.** May 25th 1994

YOU ARE ALL INVITED TO ATTEND SPAUG'S THIRD ANNUAL PLEDGES DINNER MEETING JUNE 1, 1994 AT 6:00 PM

Have you ever wondered about the person sitting at the other end of the meeting hall but have never had the opportunity to find out? Now is make new acquaintances. We will be having a pot-luck "commitment-raising" dinner Planning Meeting on Wednesday, June 1st. All dinner item and your pledge to become involved information or to RSVP, please call Beverly at



your chance to mingle and repeat of last year's successful immediately preceding the you need to bring is a pot-luck in SPAUG. For more 329-8252.

This months presentation
is BORLAND OFFICE.

SPAUG meets the last
Wednesday of each
month at Varian in
Palo Alto. Meetings
begin at 7:30. The
a d d r e s s i s
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10/1/94



The Stanford/Palo Alto
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