

BBS

THE
BULLETIN
BOARD
SERVICES
MAGAZINE

July 1995
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NETTED!

Inside Andre's
MindWire

wire your

Board

to the

Internet

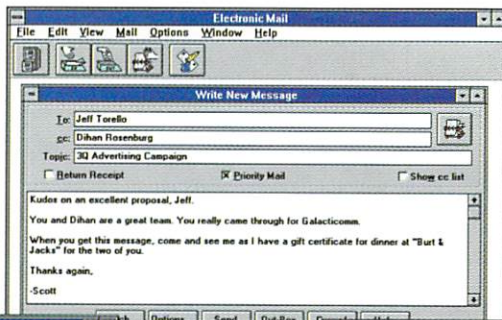


bbs.notebook
World Wide Web
BBS Numbers





Worldgroup Manager: Users access and navigate your system with Worldgroup Manager, a Windows client. With the click of an icon, users are connected and logged in to your system.

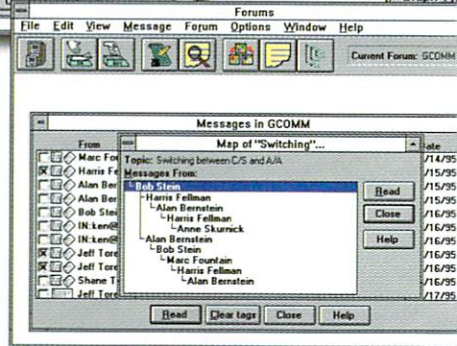


E-mail: Users can easily manage their mail with their own in box, out box, multi-folded filing cabinet, address book and more.

► *Main menu: Launch your own online service, right out of the box, with Worldgroup. Offer users e-mail, forums, multi-user teleconference, polls, files, Internet access and more.*



► *Forums: Create up to 10,000 group message areas or Internet newsgroups for users to exchange ideas on a variety of topics. A map even helps users track conversation threads visually.*



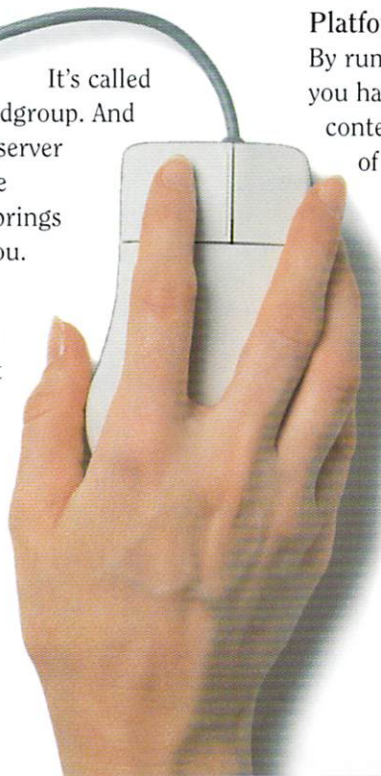
Open Your Windows to the

Worldgroup™. Bring the World a Click Away.

The newest, smartest generation of online software isn't coming from Microsoft. Or CompuServe. Or America Online. It's coming from you — and Galaticomm, the creator of The Major BBS®.

It's called Worldgroup. And it's a client/server online software platform that brings the world to you.

Think of Worldgroup as the bridge that links the people and resources within your company to the world



beyond. With the click of an icon, you can network your entire business world — customers, stockholders, prospects, field staff, distributors, vendors, the press and more — together online!

Worldgroup. The World's Most Powerful Client/Server Online Platform.

By running your own online service, you have 100% control over the content, presentation and revenue of your system. And Worldgroup's client/server approach makes it easy for anyone to use.

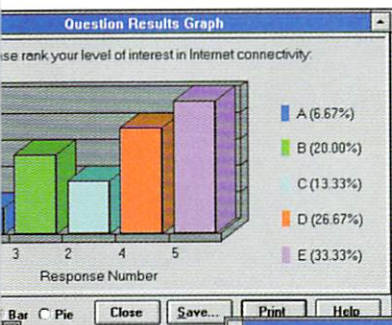
The client runs under Windows on your users' machines. Its multi-threaded architecture lets them do all sorts of cool things simultaneously. Like download files in the background, while reading new mail. Or auto update

new versions of applications transparently. Local caching, "look ahead" and client-driven intelligence maximizes performance at 2,400 or 28,800 bps.

You can customize all the icons and menu pages out of the box. With Worldgroup's multimedia features, you can have a "splash" screen with a BMP image and a WAV or MIDI file, graphic menu backdrops, real-time video and more.

There's even a "launch" client/server utility that downloads and launches files for your users, such as Adobe Acrobat files, Word documents and PowerPoint presentations, in one easy step — while the user is online.

You can use Visual Basic and C to create your own custom client/server applications (we provide source code). Or, just plug and play dozens of add-on applications from our network of Independent Software Vendors.



Polls and Questionnaires: Offer marketing surveys, suggestion boxes, applications forms and testing, to name a few. Results are immediately tallied and can be viewed as exportable bar graphs or pie charts.

File Name	Added	Size	Description
63RELE	1/24/95	3,823	Press release written about V6.2
ENTER PLS	1/24/95	4,371	Press release about Entertainment Collection
EQUIP.DOC	1/24/95	4,136	Press release about Equinox Systems, Inc.
GAMECON TXT	1/24/95	4,258	Press release about Game Connection
ICD TXT	1/24/95	6,122	Press release about Internet Connectivity Option
ICORETA TXT	1/24/95	5,712	Press release about Internet Connectivity Option
ROYER TXT	1/24/95	2,541	Press release: Galaticomm breaks world record
SNR.DOC	1/24/95	5,045	Press release: Ken Royer to head new NIS division
	1/24/95	3,960	Press release announcing Search and Retrieve

File Libraries: Users simply tag the files they're interested in and select the download icon. Files can be downloaded in the background while users enjoy your other services.

Teleconference: Users can simultaneously chat, whisper, sketch diagrams, transfer files and more with each other in real time.

Help: Users will quickly grasp the advantages of Worldgroup's friendly Windows interface, with hypertext online help at every window.

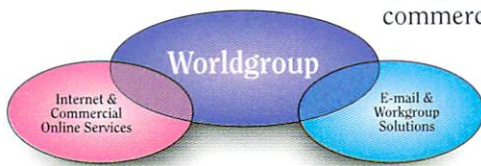
World of Online Computing

The server runs on a single 486 or Pentium DOS machine and can handle up to 256 users online at once. Locks and Keys™ security provides airtight access control.

Full system accounting and reporting is built in. And in addition to client/server users, you can still support ASCII/ANSI/RIP terminals.

Worldgroup. Beyond the World-Wide Web.

Worldgroup's client/server interface works just as well over the Internet as it does with dial-up modems. We're talking full-fledged interactive applications, not just documents. In addition, ftp server and basic WWW server capabilities are also supported.



Worldgroup provides a communication model that brings the inside world and the outside world together in a secure, productive environment.

But it doesn't stop there. You can make your service accessible via modem, serial ports, TCP/IP, Novell LAN, ISDN and X.25 networks such as CompuServe and SprintNet.

Worldgroup. The Best of Both Worlds.

Worldgroup gives you the best of workgroup software and commercial online services.

E-mail, group discussion areas, file libraries, teleconferencing, surveys and more are all built-in. You can gateway to existing message systems via MHS or UUCP. And that's just the beginning.

Worldgroup. A World of Resources... A Phone Call Away. As a Galaticomm customer, you'll also receive excellent documentation

and world-class support. In every way, we will work with you to make your online venture a success.

So open your Windows to the powerful, smart new Worldgroup of online computing today. Call your Galaticomm dealer or call us at 800-328-1128 (or 305-583-5990 outside the U.S. and Canada). You can also send e-mail on the Internet to sales@gcomm.com and access our home page by pointing your Web browser to <http://www.gcomm.com>.



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storm. It was the first system of its kind to run entirely under Windows™ and continues to set the standard of measure. Because Excalibur is built around an accelerated bi-directional protocol, users can upload and download files, chat with other users, and compose messages ... *all at the same time!* Utilizing our proprietary graphical interface, users are able to design their own menus and screens incorporating object oriented graphics, bitmapped graphics, and TrueType fonts. This means no two Excalibur based systems are the same! Advanced error correction and data compression offer reliability and

convenience to all users, even those without error-correcting modems.

As for expandability, Excalibur offers true Plug 'N Play abilities. Imagine doors that are both hassle free and easy to use. By using Excalibur's *Application Programming Interface (API)*, third party developers have created everything from Internet gateways and databases to shopping malls and interactive games. The possibilities are endless. Modem into Excalibur HQ/USA at **918.496.8113** or call 800.EXCAL.BBS (800.392.2522). In Canada, modem into Excalibur HQ/Canada at 905.508.8872. Find out what users worldwide are heralding as "*the next generation in BBS software*".



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Subscriptions: subscribe@bbsmagazine.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

	USA	CANADA/ MEXICO
1 Yr. (12 issues)	\$30	\$50
2 Yrs. (24 issues)	\$50	\$90

SINGLE COPY DISTRIBUTION

Warner Publisher Services, Inc., NY, NY

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BBS Magazine (ISSN #1055-2812) is published monthly by Callers Digest, Inc., 701 Stokes Rd., Medford, NJ 08055. Callers Digest, Inc. is not responsible for the opinions expressed by contributors. Questions and comments are welcomed. Unless otherwise instructed, we assume all rights to letters, articles, or other communications sent to Callers Digest, Inc. as unconditionally assigned for publication. Material not accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. Uploads are accepted only in ZIP format at "The Livewire BBS," 609.235.5297 (All V. Everything modems).

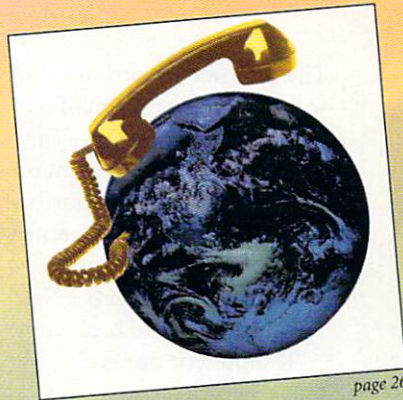
POSTMASTER: Please send all change of address (with old label and new address) to: Callers Digest, Inc., 701 Stokes Rd., Medford, NJ 08055.

PRINTED IN UNITED STATES

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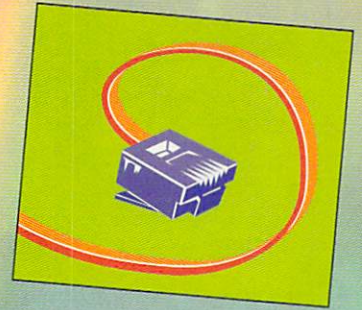
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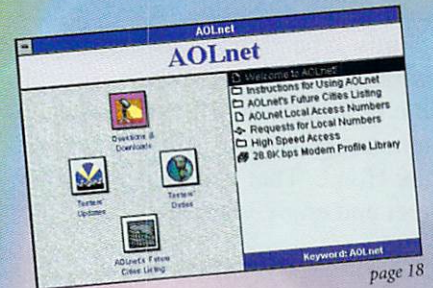
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Rusty

Edie

Call a different kind of BBS. "We are the Friendliest BBS in the World." Our name says it all. Edie and I are a couple of burnouts from the 60s. We didn't like rules then and we don't now. Come on in and relax; you will be among friends. We have a huge adult section, including over three gigs of adult graphics, as well as a fine selection of public domain and shareware programs, including over a gig of family-type graphics. But that's not what sets us apart. When you call the first time, you'll know what no amount of words can tell you, you are Home. That's right, put up your feet and enjoy yourself.

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All (V32 etc.)216-726-2620
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readme.txt

Islands no more

The Internet, in some form or other, will linger in the realm of relevance for a long time to come. That may be a safe-as-houses statement on the order of predicting tomorrow's sunrise, but it's the sturdy premise on which we base our simple advice to sysops: Get the Net.

Maybe I should back up.

It should be no secret that callers deserve a place on their sysops' mental ladder of priorities (preferably right there between a good health regimen and their mom) — caller contentment ought to be as important to them as their next breath. Period.

This didacticism is not unwarranted, mind you; rather it springs from some serious probing we did lately — listening to callers, watching their habits, fielding their complaints, and marking their interests. And after all the spying one thing became unsurprisingly clear: callers want good service and they want the Net.

Despite these sentiments, however, we also found sysops downplaying the significance of a borderless arena, perhaps fearing the vastness of the unknown. To them we say the exclusivity of a "BBS Club" may indeed keep out the lurking surliness of virtuality's darker recesses, but it also

keeps you in. Locked in. And no man is an island anymore ... at least not for long.

As for the larger part of the sysop, the issue of offering callers gateways to the Internet is less a question of philosophy than one of practicality. The question often is cost; the answer frequently ignorance.

So to figure it all out we brought in writer David Wolfe, author of *Expanding Your BBS*, and asked him to look into what it means to make your BBS a WIRED BOARD.

The first of his two-part series is presented beginning on page 10, and gives us an overview of some of the solutions being implemented by sysops. Next month he'll look a little deeper into paths of total node-ness. And, hey, maybe we'll discover validity in our predictions.

Channel 1 BBS co-sysop Tess Heder (that's HEAD-r) begins a new column this month, filling a gap previously unfilled anywhere in the BBS world. As one of the matriarchs of BBSing, she'll be doling out advice on what it takes to be a sysop in a time of incredible transition, what callers should look for in a BBS and just about anything else readers might ask. Look for her observations on page 59.



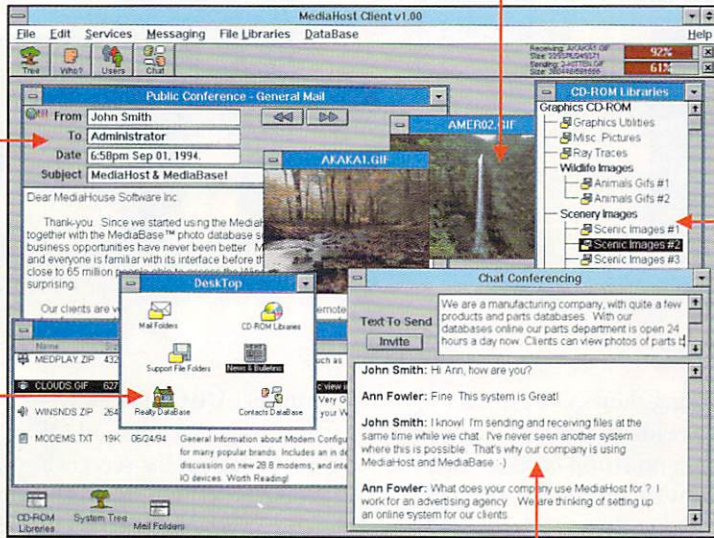
Rick Robinson
Editor
editor@bbsmagazine.com

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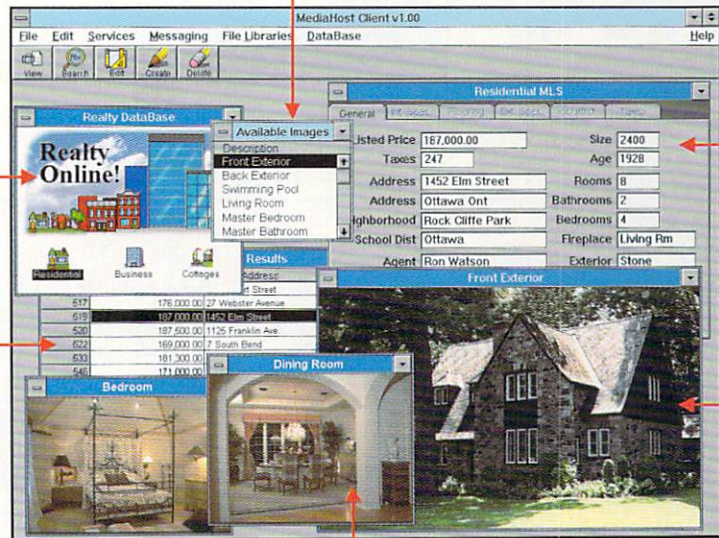
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PCBoard 15.22 Warped: Enhanced Features on a Budget

Clark Development Company's second major update of the year to its PCBoard BBS software (version 15.22) also marks the launch of its first OS/2 package.

Both DOS and OS/2 versions include new and updated features in the Internet UUCP Gateway, programming language, Fido mailer system, and PCBMail Manager. And oh yes, the nicest feature might be that the price is \$51 less than its predecessor, 15.21, until July 15 (for *BBS Magazine* readers). The OS/2 price hadn't been set at presstime.

Preconfigured installations let sysops set up a board for corporate, sales, or tech support with auto installation — first phone calls are taken in under 10 minutes.

The new made-for-OS/2 PCBoard is a 32-bit, multi-threaded, native OS/2 version of the DOS 15.22 package. With a few differences. For instance,

NEWS

benchmarking shows OS/2 just a little quicker — reading 2,059 messages on the screen in non-stop fashion takes the DOS version 79.55 seconds. OS/2? 7.95 seconds.

Capturing the same number of messages into a 2.1 meg text file takes DOS PCBoard 18.58 seconds. The OS/2 PCBoard does it in 8.08.

Features (in both versions) include:

Internet UUCP Gateway — PCBoard now provides Inbound LISTSERV support. Internet list servers have become popular because they allow anyone with an Internet email address to subscribe to special-interest postings or any Usenet newsgroup that their BBS does not normally carry. However, this has been problematic because a sysop's BBS or email system would receive separate copies of each list server transmission for each user subscribing to it. PCBoard v15.22 addresses this by allowing the sysop to designate a separate conference or forum for each list server. PCBoard can import all email received from the server into that conference, thereby reducing the amount of inbound message traffic and providing access to the list server feed for all users of the BBS.

PPLC — The PCBoard Programming Language has been enhanced with a new CONFINFO statement and function that allows reading and writing of all fields in the conference configuration (handy for sysops using PPL to create system maintenance and conference management utilities).

A new timed INKEY function allows for more efficient and user-friendly PPL programs — sysops can generate prompts that will time-out after a designated margin where previously they'd have to program control loops that monitor a timer and poll the keyboard for input. The sysop can also edit the flagged file list, add new user records, delete existing records, and kill messages.

#%!*&~

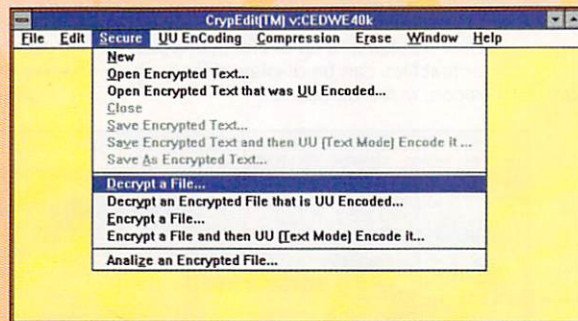
I'm reading your email — heck, not only mail but your documents, files, secret notes, the works. It's easy because they're unencrypted. Thanks.

"It can't be," you think. "Can it? Can my transmissions REALLY be hacked?"

Fact is it's not quite that easy, but it wouldn't take a gene splicer, either. Just in case, Genio USA has delivered on a nifty menu-driven program for Windows 3.1 and NT/Win95 that'll scramble your stuff beyond recognition — and only you hold the keys.

Called CrypEdit (v5.0), the program gives users a secure environment in which to edit, view, and print multiple encrypted or plain text files (up to 60 KB in size).

Double passwords are



required as a fail-safe, and encrypted text files can be saved as normal, compressed, compressed and UUencoded, or just UUencoded — all with a couple of mouse clicks.

The familiar Windows menu bar adds to the simplicity, as users just locate the file, hit "encrypt," key in the seven to 20-character password (twice), then the second password, and bingo.

Integrated UUencoding utilities will UUencode and

decode any file, split up a UUencoded file into as many as 100 parts, and reconstruct a split file so eight-bit data files can be transferred over systems limited to the seven data-bit format.

But don't forget your passwords; there are positively no back doors to this program.

CrypEdit goes for \$30 plus \$5 shipping (available in U.S. only).

Call 206.831.5591; email 76675.630@compuserve.com.

WIRE

PCBoard/Fido — Configuration files have been redesigned to make it easier for sysops to manage and configure Fido conferences. PCBoard now supports the use of multiple AKAs in a single net by allowing the sysop to specify which AKAs are used and when. This entitles many hubs needing more than one AKA in each participated net (their actual node address plus the hub address) to use PCBoard's built-in Fido mailer.

The new PPLC includes support for passthrough areas. For instance, if a BBS is a Fido hub and one of the nodes requests a Fido echo area the sysop does not carry, he or she can "pass it

through" to the caller.

Support for private messages and file attachments in Fido echo areas, and the possibility of secure netmail by allowing the option of a password, are also included.

PCBMail — PCBoard's Mail Manager for Microsoft Windows now permits messages sent to carbon copy or personal mailing lists to set Mail Waiting flags for all recipients. And those messages can have longer user names to better accommodate Internet email addresses.

Another new feature is the Out Box, which permits a user to save a message

being composed, then come back later to edit it before sending.

Despite the upgrades, 15.22 has been cut to \$99 (two-node) through July 15 for *BBS Magazine* readers only.

PCBoard comes in two, five, 10, 25, 50, 100, 250, and 1,000 nodes.

The PPLC is free with the purchase of 25 nodes and larger systems, or separately for \$80.

For more information call 801.261.1686 or 800.356.1686. For a free two-line demo call Clark's BBS, Salt Air, at 801.261.8976.

Online Sales Aloft

Closing a deal must be easier online. No eye contact, no slip of the tongue. It's invisible, silent. And it might be creepy were it not for the fact that revenue generated from what's called "electronic transactions of tangible goods" climbed to \$362 million in 1994, according to a new report from SIMBA Information, Inc.

The Electronic Marketplace 1995: Strategies For Connecting Buyers and Sellers also points out that figure marks a 27 percent increase over 1993.

The e-marketplace revenue was generated from seven "new" media technologies: business online services, con-

CONTINUES ...

Weave Your Web (for a Song)

Five hundred bucks and you've harnessed the Web.

O'Reilly & Associates, Inc. is marketing what could be a solution to the task of gaining complete control over your World Wide Web business without raiding the petty cash drawer.

Scheduled for release last month, O'Reilly's 32-bit World Wide Web server, called WebSite, goes for \$499 and offers anyone with Windows NT 3.5 or Win'95 a chance to publish and conduct business live on the Net.

O'Reilly's WebSite

product manager Gina Blaber explains the frequent reality: "Many Web users get excited by what they see out there on the Net," she says "then they get frustrated because they don't want to deal with an expensive, complicated server to put up their own information. We've designed and priced WebSite to enable anyone to start publishing on the Web within minutes."

WebSite was put together by the trio of O'Reilly, Bob Denny and Enterprise Integration

Technologies, Inc.

Some of WebSite's features include:

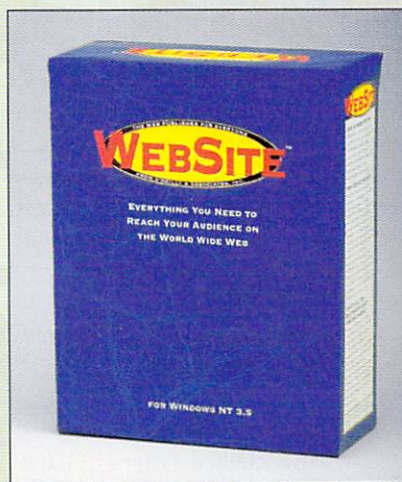
- A 32-bit HTTP server that lets operators use CGI (Common Gateway Interface) to run Excel, Visual Basic and other programs from within a Web document.
- WebView, which offers a tree-like display of documents and links on the server;

icons for file type, access state and broken links; graphical editor for enhancing images inside documents; search button; and, multiple windows for viewing several Web sites simultaneously.

- Enhanced Mosaic 2.0 with progressive display of documents, a toolbar, support for sound and external viewers, display of in-line JPEGs and DDE support.

- Complete documentation.

O'Reilly & Associates can be reached at 800.998.9938.



Top 10 downloads from SPACE BBS for April 1995

TITLE	SIZE	FILE DESCRIPTION
1 WINZIP56.ZIP	292556	WinZip 5.6 w/Built-in ZIP TAR gzip & compress Brings the convenience of Windows to Zipping. "Best Utility", 1994 Shareware Industry Awards. "Recommended Download", Windows Magazine. "Top 10" Windows Utility, CompuServe Magazine.
2 BGI20.ZIP	378805	"The Beginner's Guide to the Internet" is a full-color, computer-based tutorial about the Internet. It covers email, ftp, telnet, gopher, Archie, Veronica, WAIS, World Wide Web, newsgroups, mailing lists, IRC and more.
3 NBUST12D.ZIP	205380	NAG-BUSTER version 1.2d - Fully automatic program that removes intro screens (nags), checksums, time limits and other crippled routines and irrelevant information.
4 SATAN10.ZIP	711608	SATAN v1.0 Unix test program by Mr. Farmer. Well publicized program to locate faults in Internet security.
5 UNFORGI2.ZIP	541695	Moraff's Dungeons of the Unforgiven. This stunning dungeons and monsters game contains 25 levels of the most realistic 3D imaging ever seen in a computer game.
6 BIGSURF1.ZIP	67552	Internet Surf List (PC/DOS version) the first issue of BIGSurf Internet surf list of places to go and things to do on the Internet.
7 SCN-220E.ZIP	398230	VirusScan for DOS — new version 2.2.0 (220) 03/31/95 by McAfee, Inc. Scans and cleans PC's/LAN's for known and new viruses.
8 VRPOOL10.ZIP	324232	Virtual Pool Demo — Interplay — Celeris. Experience the true meaning of virtual reality and become immersed in the most incredibly accurate real-time simulation ever developed for the personal computer.
9 WINBR13.ZIP	302757	MVP Bridge for Windows by MVP Software. The DOS version of MVP Bridge won major industry awards. Now MVP Software takes the game a step further by setting the standard for Windows card games.
10 OILCAP70.ZIP	131897	OILCAP v7.0 (Req. EGA/VGA & Mouse). Oilcap pits you against the clock as you try to contain the gushing oil by creating a series of passages to control its flow. Quick thinking and fast reflexes are essential.

List courtesy of Space BBS (415.323.4398) — 15-line PCBoard West Coast ASP Hub.

sumer online services, the Internet, CD-ROM, interactive television, screen phones, and multimedia kiosks — just about everything but BBSs, which casts doubt on the validity of the numbers.

The report also includes five-year revenue forecasts and market share for each new media technology.

Sales generated from business and consumer online marketing efforts represented 90 percent of the market, or

\$324.9 million last year. Interestingly, the Internet made up just six percent of the transactions, although SIMBA (a unit of Cowles Business Media) predicts the Net will be number two by 2000. As for (ugh) interactive television, the report claims this, too, will experience major growth between 1998 and 2000 after "coming into its own" in 1998.

The Electronic Marketplace 1995 is available for \$1,150 by calling 203.834.0033 ext. 173, or emailing simba99@aol.com.

Offline

by John Baynham



The Exodus Continues

Between January and March of this year, subscribership to the commercial online services jumped 15.5 percent, according to the Washington D.C.-based newsletter *Information & Interactive Services Report*, putting the overall number at 7,303,300. This marks a 47 percent increase over March of 1994.

However, according to *IISR*, many subscribe to more than one service bringing the actual number of households down to about 5.9 million.

The biweekly newsletter estimates that at the current rate of growth over

10,000 are signing up with an online service each day.

America Online took honors as the fastest growing service, adding 500,000 subscribers in the first quarter. CompuServe logged in with 250,000 newcomers.

CompuServe still ranked at the top with 2,700,000 subscribers (700,000 of whom are outside North America), followed by America Online with 2,000,000 and Prodigy with 1.3 million. Delphi counts 140,000 as members, newcomer eWorld has 80,000 and GENie is close behind with 75,000.

Published by Business Research Publications, *IISR* covers online services and interactivity and tracks the performance and pricing of 73 online services.

EMS: Pick of the Disks

You've no doubt heard about the gargantuan number of programs and utilities EMS Professional Shareware crams onto its CD-ROMs. What you might not know is how good the stuff is.

Take it from the readers of *Visual Basic Programmer's Journal* — it's all good.

EMS's Access Utility Library CD-ROM was recently awarded a Reader's Choice Award by the journal's readership, and is using the attention as a launching pad for the next version of the library, which began shipping in April.

The new edition has 622 public domain and shareware files specifically for developers using Microsoft's Access Database.

The programs are held on a trio of CDs (also available on diskette) that include an indexed database directory and search program.

Among others, files on the disks include accounting, BarCode, SQL and tables.

Street price is \$59.50 Call 301.924.3594.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

Twenty-seven-year-old Andre Durand sits at the helm of Santa Barbara, California's Durand Communications Network, predicting the future.

Credited with the multimedia database Genesys and FILEX, an elegant drag-n-drop communications solution, DCN now faces a new task: converting the converted.

With a division formed between those who traverse the online circuit and others who make a beeline for the Net, Durand seems to have taken his company down the path of least resistance — to a bold, unique platform where all are welcome.

In April DCN launched MindWire, a Windows client/server communications system that endeavors not only to provide something for everyone, but also to give all-comers the capacity to harness a Netted online business for their desktop.

It was on this platform in April — in the chat area where talkers are announced by their photos — that we conducted the following interview.

BBS Magazine: What message are you trying to get across with the name MindWire?

Andre Durand: Well, online is a way for Mind's to meet. Wire is the way we do it right now. Later on, it may be called MindWire-Less. If you get my point. MindWire: "Where Minds Meet."

BBS: How long has DCN been working on the program?

AD: For about 2.5 years. The concept was originally called CLASS (CLIENT Access to Systems and Services), but that was primarily a suite of concepts rather than any particular product. MindWire is the culmination and refinement of all of the original CLASS concepts.

BBS: Take us through a quick tour of what you see as the highlights of MindWire.

AD: MindWire is the ultimate platform for developing client/server applications for the online environment. As a platform, it is to the development of online applications for the Internet

Inside Andre's MindWire

what Windows was for the development of graphical applications when only DOS existed. Like Windows, MindWire comes with "Sample Applications." Unlike Windows "Notepad," "Write" and "Solitaire," however, the out-of-the-box applications of MindWire facilitate the basic services of any communications platform (email, messaging etc.). As a product, MindWire is extremely powerful. Think of it as a "Lego set" of tools that will allow the traditional sysop to create an online service. These tools include WIP (Windows Interface Protocol) which allows people to create the entire 'look-and-feel' of their online service with compressed images, sound, text, buttons,

text files, 24bit color menus etc.

They also include CAM (Client Application Manager). This utility is a sophisticated tool that allows the service provider the ability to control what is running on the client's computer. It also provides automatic software updating of client applications. MindWire comes with network, Internet and modem connectivity out of the box. For the client, it comes with email, chat (with photos), messaging, file library (with file previews and simultaneous upload/download), product ordering, account maintenance, menu tree viewer and WIP compatibility. MindWire incorporates the best of both the client/server world and the traditional emulated terminal host world.

BBS: MindWire is presented as a "powerful online and Internet platform." Specifically, in what ways is it both of these?

AD: Well, online I presume includes the Internet. As an online AND Internet platform (thus allowing modem dialup), MindWire leverages Windows and Windows NT to provide Internet connectivity. If you operate the MindWire Server on a Windows NT Server, a MindWire Client can access a MindWire Server (which is on the Internet) through TCP/IP. A MindWire Server running on Windows NT is not only an off-ramp or "destination"; it can also be an onramp to the Internet.

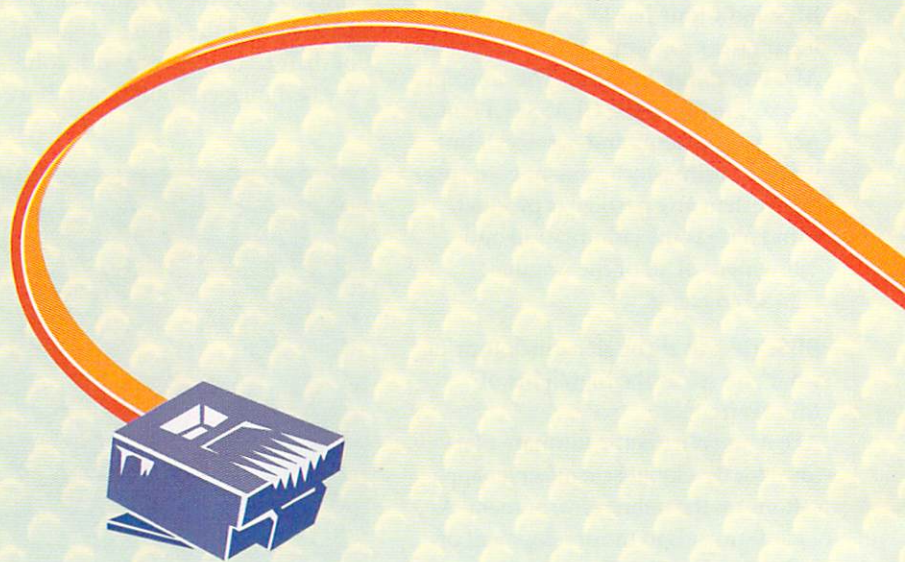
This happens because you can access a MindWire Server through PPP or SLIP dialup. If your MindWire Server is on Windows NT and users dial with Internet in a Box or Trumpet WinSock, then they can "gateway" right past the MindWire Server to the Internet. This may be too technical, but it shows how integrated MindWire is to the wave of the future. Modem dialup, network and Internet access are all seamlessly integrated. The problem with strictly client/server is that it is unmodifiable by the service provider.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

GETTING

**Tapping the Net to
what you need,
who you need
and how to get**



NETTED

rough a BBS—

by David Wolfe

first of two parts

it

BBSing has changed much in recent years. With this statement few would disagree. Electronic bulletin boards have gone from being backwoods hobbies for techno junkies like myself to everyday aspects of many people's lives. One of the greatest leaps telecommunications has taken has been connectability. However you want to define this term would probably be correct. Online systems are no longer isolated entities that never share information, but rather are most likely nexus points or nodes on an ever-growing network of computers.

CONTINUES...

Even the term network can be confusing these days. BBS networks themselves are no longer constricted to communicating only with other members of the same network. Fidonet users can communicate with Internet users, RIME users can "talk" to Fidonet users and so on. The concept of gateways to other networks has taken hold in both theory and practice. Today, information can get from any point to any other point just by making a few leaps and conversions.

But, by far, the topic on most sysops' minds is the Internet. If you run your own BBS, no matter how small, you have undoubtedly fielded questions from users like "Uh, can I send my friend Bob in Ohio a message from here?" or "Hey, how do I Telnet from the command line???" And, by far, the Internet has the most features of all major online networks and is the easiest to link into. This article is (I hope) going to give you a basic understanding of how to place your BBS on the Internet in some form or another. Unlike most other networks such as Fido and RIME, Internet connectivity comes in many flavors — some as expensive as caviar (not the Western Digital hard drive model) and some as cheap as a trip to Mickey-Dee's.

This is part one of a two part article. What you will find covered this month are things like: should you connect your board to the Internet, the basic forms of Internet connections, and the costs involved. Part two will cover more specific elements about how to actually incorporate Internet features into your BBS software.

If you haven't already thought about getting some form of Internet connection for your BBS, you are probably in a shrinking group of sysops. Many sysops who don't have a clear idea of what the Internet is or what it can do for them sometimes have an incorrect opinion of how deep they should delve into it. The cost levels involved in Internet connections vary widely depending

on the services you want to be able to offer your callers. Internet access can be as simple as offering email and Newsgroup access to callers, or you can jump in head first and try to offer SLIP or PPP access (ways of letting users use your BBS as a spring-board to get to other sites on the Internet.)

Before you even think about what form of Internet access you want to give board members, you have to ask yourself whether that access is going to be worth it. Many sysops want to stay as current as they can on any developments that happen with telecommunications. Users may be

screaming for SLIP access through your board, but you must weigh the consequences of what this will do to your BBS. Providing SLIP or PPP access (which can be done just by purchasing dedicated phone lines to have a constant connection to a provider and then having the right software) will change the very nature of your BBS. Providing SLIP access will take your system away from being a BBS and into the realm of the Access Provider (something totally different.) Ninety-nine percent or all BBSs (no matter how large or small) should really think long and hard before becoming an access provider.

True access providers are popping up all over the place (in the US and in other countries). True access providers have hundreds of dial-up lines and dedicated Unix servers which give access to a wide range of people, businesses, universities, etc. Providing Internet SLIP or PPP access is a big business today. Here in Indianapolis, three large access providers have set up shop and are now competing vigorously against each other for user business. Even the largest BBS would find it hard competing against just one of these players, but having three large providers in the same area makes it virtually impossible for a BBS to succeed as an access provider.

This certainly does not mean that you should never have SLIP access via your BBS, or that you should stay away from the Internet all together. You should, however, have good reason for wanting such a high level of access. Giving SLIP access to all users of a public BBS would be both technically and economically prohibitive for a small or medium sized board. However, adding email and Newsgroup access can greatly enhance your BBS's appeal to new and existing users, without incurring a large startup cost and monthly maintenance cost.

Forms of access

Ok, now onto the technical aspects of what we've been discussing. The first question you have to ask yourself is what sort of Internet access are you going to provide to users. Is this going to be email only access, Newsgroup only, full SLIP access, what? Most average BBSs find that offering email and Newsgroup access is the easiest and cheapest route since it doesn't require any dedicated access into the Internet itself. Email and Newsgroups can be swapped out once a day, once an hour, or more frequently, depending on your system's need for such things. No special hardware will be needed for this type of access, either. All you need is a computer and a modem and

you can have this form of Internet access. If you decide that your users need to have SLIP access through your system, you will be dealing with a much larger issue involving at the very least, new dedicated phone lines, new modems, a Unix or Linux server, and possibly a gateway machine to link your BBS machine(s) with the Internet server.

The second question you have to ask yourself is about actually incorporating Internet features like email, Newsgroups, SLIP access, etc., into your BBS. Can your BBS software handle such things internally or is other software involved? Most of the big BBS players either have internal Internet features or are working on getting such features ready. If your BBS software does not have internal Internet features, you can always go to the many third-party software packages out there written for just such purposes. Newsgroup and email doors are popping up all over the place. I'll attempt to be as unbiased as I can when talking about the various ways BBS software is incorporating Internet features, but every sysop has his or her favorite software.

Some BBS software has internal Internet features by default, and some require you to purchase add-on software from the BBS company. If your BBS software doesn't seem to have internal Internet features, look around and see what is available on boards with large file bases. You might have to call the support board for your particular BBS software to find the right software (or to get information on how to order the right software). Using such software to actually connect to the Internet will be covered in part two of this article.

Once you know what you want and if you can use it, the next step is to find someone who can give you Internet access. This is not always as easy as it sounds. Even though the Internet seems to be everywhere (as some would like you to think), you might not have an access provider in your area. In fact, you might be looking at

long distance-costs to connect with the nearest provider who can give you the right link.

You see what?

Access providers can give you many forms of entree. The most common form, the one I am sure you've heard talked about most often, is a UUCP connection. UUCP stands for Unix to Unix Copy Protocol (though I have heard it referred to sans Protocol). Let's face it, the Internet is Unix based. If you want Unix stuff,

you have to talk the Unix talk. This in itself isn't that hard to overcome. Heck, Macs are logging into PC based boards everyday and vice versa. All it takes is the right emulation and any machine can talk with any other machine. Unix systems have standard ways of swapping data via serial connections and this standard, or protocol, is UUCP (which has many flavors and variations.)

UUCP allows any BBS to have access to both email and Newsgroup feeds. UUCP is basically a method of logging into an access provider and downloading data as you might download files from other BBSs. Nothing too complex is really involved. But, as already mentioned, you must have the right software with which to do this — UUCP connectivity software. If your BBS does not have any Internet connectability software at all, you might look into getting a copy of Waffle, a small, complete BBS package designed around UUCP which can also be run as a door on an existing BBS.

Not all access providers offer UUCP connections. UUCP connections are not as profitable as SLIP connections and require more setup and maintenance by the provider. Understand that UUCP connections supply all users of a BBS with Internet access. This means an increased work load for the provider giving the UUCP connection. This is why some access providers stay away from giving BBSs a UUCP connection.

The other popular type of access you can get from an access provider is SLIP (PPP or TCP/IP) access. This is the form of access that actually puts you or your users "on" the Internet, and allows them to do such things as Telnet to other sites, FTP files from one site to you, access such features like Archie, Gopher, or the World Wide Web, etc. SLIP is an acronym for Serial Line Internet Protocol. In essence, SLIP-type access gives your system a full-time network connection to the Internet.

Of course, in order to have this form of

access, you must have at least one dedicated line into an established provider, and the software on your end to manage this connection. The software management aspect can be done in several ways. Some BBS packages have internal SLIP management. The Major BBS comes to mind. The Major does not need to gateway to a Unix machine in order to be on the Internet via a SLIP connection. (Other BBS packages do require a Unix machine to manage the SLIP Internet connection of a

CONTINUES...

DOS-based board.) The DOS-based BBS in turn would be linked to the Unix machine via null modem cables connected to the serial ports of both the BBS machine and the Unix machine. This arrangement would give your users a menued method of Internet access. Meaning, your users would still be presented with BBS screens and menus but they could navigate the Net from your system.

Another flavor of SLIP access is a more expensive one. If you want to provide your users with the ability to by-pass your BBS altogether, special hardware is needed as a terminal server that can directly route a caller to the Unix machine (which then places him on the Internet) or to the BBS. If you have ever logged into an access provider, you are familiar with the standard Unix login procedure. For example, I can log into my access provider in three ways. The first is by logging in as my BBS (which has a login ID of PANDY) to do a UUCP transfer of data, or I can login personally as DWOLFE to have menued access through the menu system my access provider supplies, or as DWOLFE1 if I want to have actual SLIP access to run my Web browser, FTP files and so on. The front end must be able to route callers depending on what they want to do. Terminal servers can be bought by anyone, not just the big-time players. I know of several smaller BBSs that use terminal servers to route callers correctly.

Go figure — paying the price

All access providers charge differently — there's an understatement. The fee they charge relates directly to the competition they have. No competition means a much higher price for connections. I can only give you prices I have found in my area (remember the three competitors) as a guideline for what you may find in your area.

My access provider charges a minimum of \$25 a month for my UUCP connection. This fee includes a \$1-an-hour connection fee. So, I have 25 hours a month I can be online before

my cost begins to mount. Initial setup costs of UUCP connection range from \$25 to \$50 in my area, depending on whether you want to get a domain name assigned to your BBS. If you have an average amount of email and Newsgroup traffic, 25 hours a month is plenty. But, if your users begin to get on mailing lists and begin to do

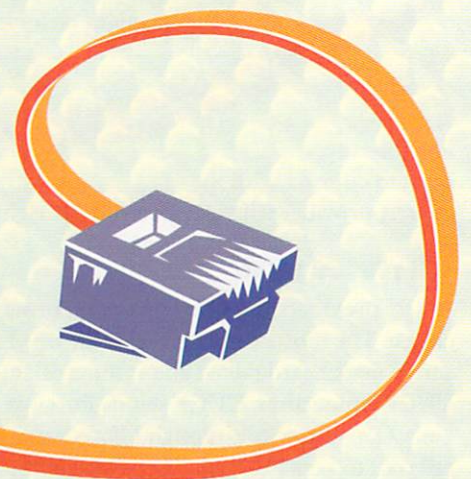
FTP email (downloading files via email), your time online will skyrocket. Another access provider in town charges a monthly flat fee of \$40 and an additional fee of \$1 per hour of connect time.

Dedicated SLIP access around here can range from around \$100 (and up) a month for a single 14.4 Kbps connection and a setup fee of around \$220. This does not include the actual cost of the line. All access providers that give you dedicated access will expect you to pick up the line charges assessed by the phone company. That's another \$20 a month at least. And, some providers will expect you to pay for two lines so they can replace that dial-in node you are using on their system.

Digital lines provide SLIP access at a much higher speed and allow multiple users on your BBS to have simultaneous access. Digital lines have many variations and range from a monthly cost of around \$350 for a 56 Kb line (and a \$1,000 setup cost) to well over \$1000 a month for a 1.54 MB per second line. And, if you are planning on getting a digital line, you will be needing a digital modem to use on that line. Digital modems are now quickly dropping in price and range from \$300 for a low-end 64 Kb model to \$600 and higher for top-shelf models.

As you can see, full Internet SLIP access is a pricey option in just setup and line fees alone. When you begin talking about getting a dedicated Unix machine and a possible terminal server, the cost increases exponentially. In part two of this article, I'll talk about what you can do with all of this stuff and give you a clearer idea of specifically how to incorporate the Internet into your own BBS software. ■■■■■

David Wolfe is a telecommunications developer for Core Technologies and a freelance writer. He can be reached via email at sysop@pandy.com or via his BBS, Pandaemonium, at 317.580.1531.



FEATURES

FLEXIBLE USER INTERFACE

- Complete flexibility in design of data-entry, searching, browsing and detailed viewing
- ANSI, RIPscript & WIP graphics protocol support for all database functions (DOS & Windows Access)
- Complete entry screen validation via pick lists
- Easily jumps from browse to detail viewing

PHOTOGRAPHS IN SECONDS

- Support for the following image formats: JPG, CMP, PCX, BMP, TIF, TGA and GIF

RELIABLE MULTI-USER CAPABILITIES

- Support for multiple users running separate copies of DC GENESYS on the same computer (ie: DESQview) or on separate computers on a LAN network
- Seamless sharing of data with concurrent dBase/FoxPro applications on the same LAN



DC GENESYS v1.1

Online Multimedia Databases

Imagine creating a beautiful 24-bit color multimedia database that will run with any BBS. DC GENESYS™ allows everyone to easily develop robust graphical online informational applications and services. Durand Communications Network (DCN) specializes in providing interactive software for the online industry that is affordable, easy-to-configure and easy-to-use. DC GENESYS comes with CONTACT PHONEBOOK™, a turnkey photographic directory application. Additional turnkey applications include: CATALOGS PLUS™, AUTO SELLER™, RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE™ and MATCH MAKER™. With DCN's all new Windows Interface Protocol™ (WIP), created with the DC INTERFACE BUILDER™, your end-users will be able to access your database with a true all Windows® interface. Your applications can have embedded compressed graphics, text files, sound files and more. DC GENESYS can be accessed through a free terminal program for DOS and Windows.

A WIP Main Menu

create beautiful native Windows menus with sound, text, icons and compressed images for users to view

B Notepad

after creating menus in ANSI, RIP or WIP, create an application in GENSCRIPT to link menus with the GENESYS Database

C DC COMPRESS

DC COMPRESS for Windows can compress TIF, TGA, BMP, PCX and GIF images to CMP or JPG

D Detailed Output

users will see online 24-bit color WIP menu

E WIP Navigator

displays the status of your current online WIP session



Glued to the Net

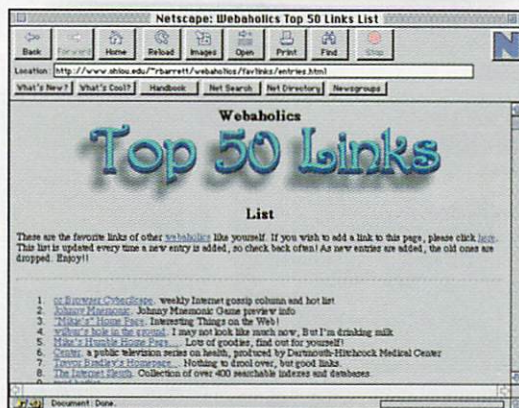
Prescription for Webaholics: more URLs.

I recall how it was when I first started out on the Internet, with a newly installed dial-up SLIP account for my Macintosh: I found the Web a terribly tedious and boring experience. Fact is, the NCSA Mosaic browser was slow as molasses, and it was no fun turning off the image loading — all you got were those goofy little image icons, and there was no way to load pictures individually — ZZZ.

But times have changed. The Web has blossomed into a hip place to hang. And in these Netscape-enhanced days, with creativity blossoming at nearly every home page, it's hard to become bored. Click, click, click, click... Hello, my name is Dave, and I am a Webaholic.

Addicted to the World Wide Web? I know, it's hard not to be. Fortunately, there is a cause devoted to this state — although in my experience it made things worse, not better. If

you change Web browsers more often than you change your underwear, the Webaholics site at <http://www.ohiou.edu/~rbarrett/webaholics/ver2/index.html> may be just the place for you. It's a site designed for those who click well into the night... and the next day... and the next night... and, well, you've got the image. The deal there is that you get to add any Web link that you want, and it's instantly posted at the top of the site's Top 50 list. And, on a slow day, it might still be moving down the list an hour



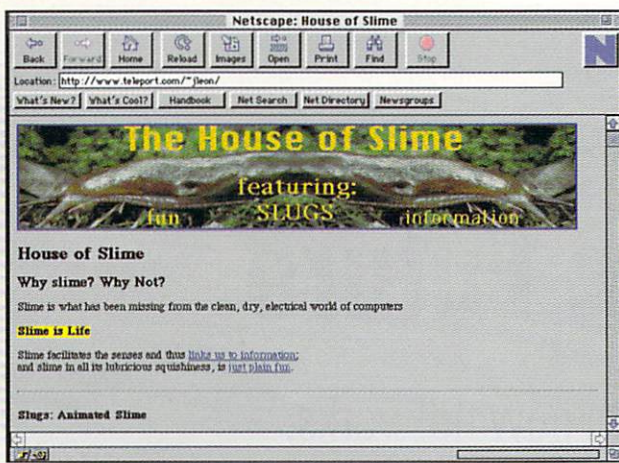
later. Of course, part of the joy is cycling through the list and finding some of the cool new links. But it's also a way to enjoy your own, er, 15 minutes of fame. (Is this what Andy Warhol had in mind?)

The truly Web addicted can surf without touching their mouse or keyboard. The Web autopilot uses the new push/pull technology popularized by Netscape to take control of the user's browser and pull up a new page every 12 seconds or so. The site has a pool of more than 7,000 places to visit, and it's fully automated. So plug in at <http://www.netgen.com/~mkgray/autopilot.html>.

Another near-useless diversion on the Net, while I'm on the subject, is the Automatic Complaint Generator. I think that I had the most fun I have ever had on the Web running this little gizmo and sending the entertaining results to all of my friends (and a few of my enemies). All you do is enter in the full name, sex, and preferred name for your target, the number of para-

KEYWORDS

Help for the addicted
Slimed
Page supplies



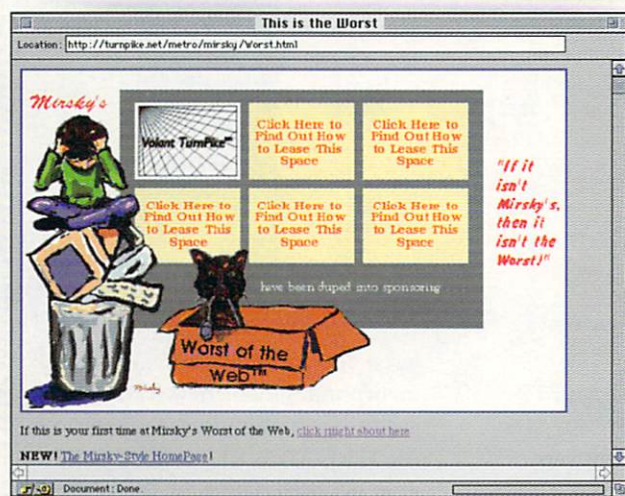
graphs of drivel that you want, and then press "Complain." The results are hysterical, remarkably intelligible, and probably suitable for submission to your local community newspaper (which generally has a hard time filling its letter page anyway, and the editor will never even notice the difference). Use it with indiscretion at <http://www-csag.cs.uiuc.edu:80/individual/pakin/complaint/>.

On the Ragu Home Page (<http://www.ragu.com/>), you can learn Italian or enter to win a trip to the Old Country. Someone with a sick sense of humor has put up a list of Kansas Sen. Bob Dole's contributions while in office — it's an empty page. Oh well, perhaps the list is in transition. Find out for yourself at <http://www.shore.net/~jlutch/robert.dole.html>. Those who want to visit the deep, dank underbelly of the Web can jump to the House of Slime (<http://www.teleport.com/~jleon/>). No, it's no den of iniquity — it's a slugfest. The page is devoted to the ideal that slime is life. Uh huh.

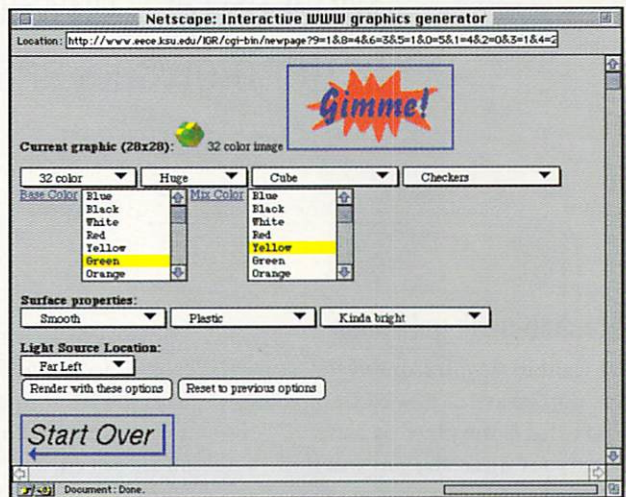
While you're at it, you might as well check out the Worst of the Web (<http://turnpike.net/metro/mirsky/Worst.html>) and the Useless Page (<http://www.primus.com/staff/paulp/useless.html>). It's amazing the things that some people will put on the Web. If you're thinking of inventorying your desk and putting the list on your home page, it's been done.

Want to chronicle your lunch menu, or tally your CD collection? Ditto.

If you're a true Webaholic, you'll surely want to erect your own contribution to the ever expanding cyberscape. And for



this you need the right tools. Windows users will be happy to know that the best HyperText Markup Language (HTML) editor I've found for any platform is HTML Writer by Kris Nosack, and best of all it's free. It can save HTML pages in UNIX format, includes templates and a handy toolbar, and it's quite sturdy. You can find it at <http://lal.cs.byu.edu:80/people/nosack/>. Macintosh users may want to shop around, but Robert C. Best III's shareware Web Weaver is a noble effort, and it's a good tool for getting started. Personally, I perform all of my HTML touchups with SimpleText, but I use Web Weaver to get the basic pages down. Get your copy at <http://www.potsdam.edu/Web.Weaver/About.html>.



Next you'll want to add some images. If you don't have your own private stock, Storm Software has kindly placed a growing library of downloadable photos on the Web. They want you to buy their Windows image editing package, and they have one of the best tutorials I've seen online, so you might just want to check it out: <http://www.stormsoft.com/storm/>. You'll probably want some fancy bullets to spice up your page; the image generator at <http://www.eece.ksu.edu/IGR/intro.html> will offer you some cool window dressings, fancy and free.

Finally, if you want to get patternized, you'll probably need a little assistance color coordinating your text and links. This can be tricky — the current Netscape browser extension requires that you translate RGB color codes into hexadecimal. Fortunately, Webaholics has a nice little cheat sheet at <http://www.ohiou.edu/~rbarrett/webaholics/ver2/colors.html>.

Once your page is ready, be sure to publicize it on the Webaholics Top 50. Who knows — perhaps you'll be spotted by an agent and called in to co-star with Kato Kaelin in future episode of "BayWatch."

Overheard on the 'Net

"Gigabyte here, gigabyte there — pretty soon you're talking real memory." ■■■■

If you'd like to suggest an odd or disturbing URL for this column, give feedback, or get wildly philosophical about the future of the World Wide Web, you can write Dave Kramer at reeltime@omni.voicenet.com. Include a nifty original quote in your .sig, and you'll be a future "overheard" candidate.

Waltzing the Future

Services race onward with new networks, better browsers and a place to call home.

AOL's techno-geek gold mine

Do you want to stay in front of the ever-breaking wave of new technologies? If so, this is the place to surf. Whatever your interests, you will find up-to-the-minute information here about things that plug-in, re-charge, use batteries, or have buttons and lights. In other words, this is the one-stop spot for the latest about audio, video, communications and personal electronics. AOL's Consumer Electronics Forum is a wealth of information for the techno-geek in us all.

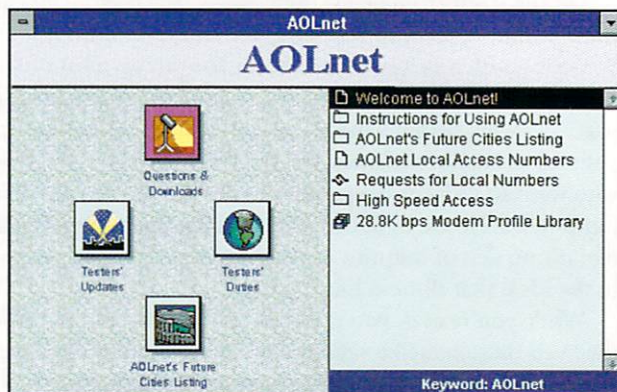
The Consumer Electronics area is divided into subsets, one of which is Consumer Electronics Forums, where AOL members and electronics experts gather to discuss technologies and share knowledge. Message bases include Auto, Stereo and Phones, Home and Business Telephones, PDA, Solar Power, and Home Automation. The Manufacturers' Corner is where major electronics companies maintain

informational "storefronts" to provide you with the latest updates about their products and services.

AOL's aim is to offer both substance and entertainment here. As you explore Consumer Electronics, you will come across a variety of venues: some are technical, others recreational. It's rather like walking along a downtown street, where you might find a theater between a book shop and a stereo store. On AOL's cyberstreet, however, the various enterprises can easily be connected in a very meaningful way. AOL's mission, as America Online President Steve Case said recently, "is also about creating linkages between services that people find really useful. The context is almost as important as the content."

Updates: Users with Internet FTP access can get the latest beta copy of the Windows America Online software from AOL's FTP site (ftp.aol.com). The

latest version at presstime (v2.0b12) incorporates many new features such as access via the Windows Sockets Interface (Winsock) as well as new graphics preferences for JPEG com-



KEYWORDS

On cyber-street
WinCim
Custom forums

pression, view during download and overriding the default AOL color resolution auto-detection.

The tool bar and menu bar have been modified to provide more useful options like print, People Connection and Spotlight.

AOLNet is the new data carrier network that will let callers connect at speeds up to 28.8K bps, depending on your modem's capabilities, and at no extra charge. (Refer to your modem manual to determine the highest rate at which your modem can transmit data — not fax.)

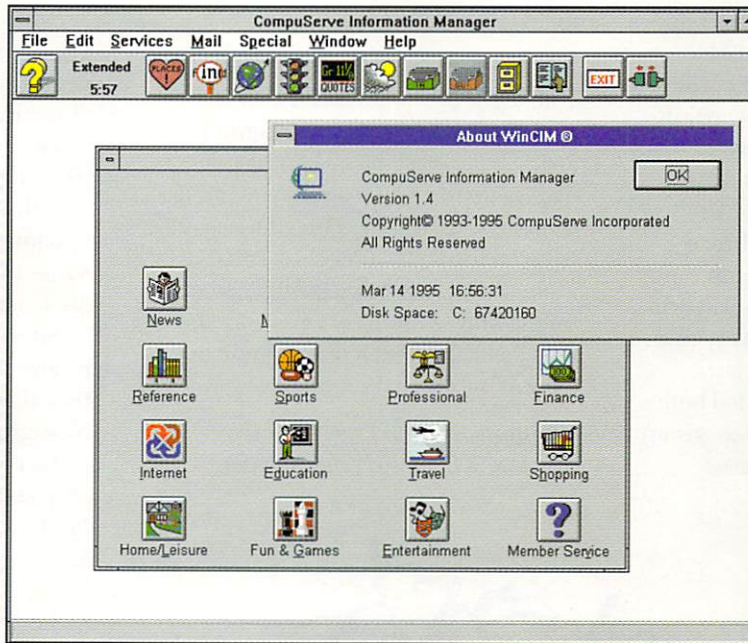
AOLNet is actually a new network — completely separate from Sprintnet and Tymnet. When you connect to America Online using AOLNet, you will experience a faster, more reliable connection process, and all the benefits of being connected to the service at a high baud rate. Users interested in using AOLNet should use Keyword AOLNet for more information.

CompuServe

CompuServe has made available WinCim v1.4, which brings a host of new features to the software for Windows.

More robust navigation and presentation allow users to display CIS hypertext documents containing multiple fonts, graphical images and colorful backgrounds. What was once a boring window with plain text can now be presented within a dramatically more interesting format. Like users of the World Wide Web, WinCim v1.4 users can navigate to related topics on CIS using hotlinks within documents. These documents can be saved, printed or shared with other applications on the desktop.

And WinCim users can now connect to CIS via the Internet, too, for v1.4 supports the Windows Socket Interface (Winsock), providing users with



direct access from their existing Internet account. All of the most popular Winsock-compatible Internet connection mechanisms can be used to connect to CIS, which means corporate can now access CIS via the LAN/WAN connection without having a modem on their desk.

WinCim v1.4 also contains full DEC VT-100 terminal emulation support for CIS's telnet gateway to supported hosts on the Net, not to mention for applica-

tion launching and graphical person-to-person communications for CIS electronic conferences.

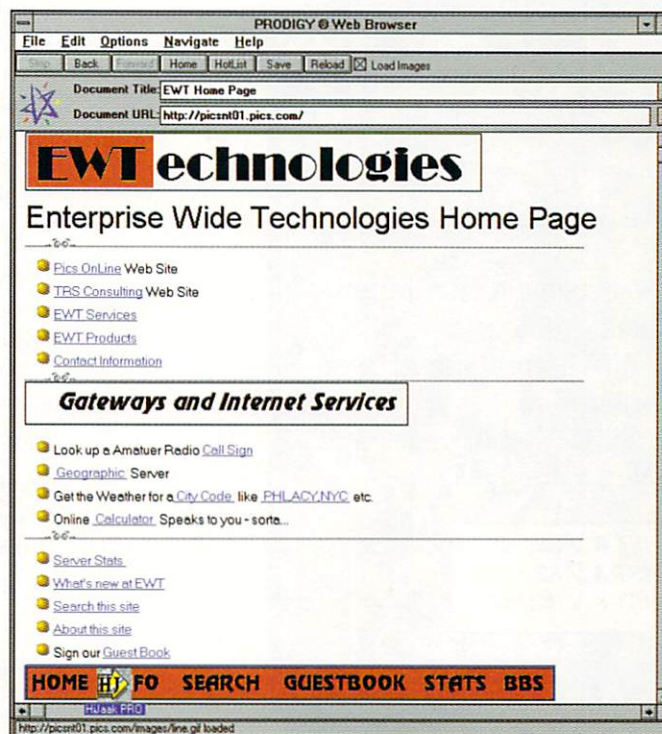
CIS users enrolled in the standard pricing plan (\$9.95 a month) now automatically receive three free hours of Internet access per month in addition to unlimited access to more than 120 basic CIS services. For users who want more of an Internet fix, the Internet Club offers 20 hours of access to Internet services for a \$15 monthly fee and additional hours billed

at \$1.95 an hour. Takers get free NetLauncher software including CompuServe's Internet Dialer, and SPRY's Mosaic Web browser. This software is for Windows — callers on other platforms and operating systems can receive information and instructions for accessing the connection from Macintosh, OS/2, Unix and any other TCP/IP capable platform by entering GO INTERNET.

Prodigy

Prodigy Services Company said it will begin making major service enhancements for members with at least four megabytes of RAM and Windows. The enhancements will be introduced in phases, and will likely leverage Prodigy's next-generation "P2" technology.

The enhancements display content in Internet-standard Hyper-Text Markup Language (HTML), and allow users to easily navigate between Internet and Prodigy content. They will be offered as an upgrade to the current Prodigy service for Windows at no extra



CONTINUES ...

charge. New developments are also in the works for Windows 95 and Mac.

"We'll begin our new product roll-outs with those that benefit the majority of our membership as it exists today," said Prodigy President Ross Glatzer. "In coming months, 8MB PCs will proliferate and create the broad installed base for us to launch our Windows 95 product. We also will provide the Macintosh community with an Internet-linked platform."

As well, Prodigy has upgraded both its Web browser and Usenet newsgroup software recently. The new release

includes the following:

Advanced Threading Functionality

Unlike the previous Reader that restricted viewing to 100 newsgroup articles at a time, the new Reader will display up to 1,000 threads containing thousands of articles. This allows users to scroll through all requested articles at the click of a mouse, greatly reducing online time. Threads are also sorted alphabetically, which makes finding favorite subject matter a snap.

Windows Control Functionality

The new Reader supports standard

Windows control functionality. This allows users to, among other things, select multiple articles and binaries for viewing and downloading. For instance, a member can now select all parts of a binary file, name it once, and download it for off-line viewing. Previously, a user was required to open, name and download each part of the file separately.

Subscribers will automatically receive the enhanced version the first time they enroll in Prodigy's NewsGroup Reader.

In a related development, Prodigy also has introduced a low-cost Prodigy/Internet combo pricing plan. The new 30/30 Plan provides 30 hours of monthly usage for \$30. That \$1/hour rate includes access to the Prodigy service and its Internet offerings.

New features in the Prodigy Web browser include:

Multiple Hot Lists, in which Web surfers can save addresses of their favorite home pages as part of multiple lists. For example, they can keep separate lists for sports, reference, government, or any other lists they choose to set up.


Enhanced Image Delivery: Some browsers wait for an entire picture to arrive in the computer before "painting" it on-screen, which gives graphics a reputation for being slow. Prodigy's browser uses a process called incremental painting, where the computer doesn't wait for the whole picture, but instead begins painting the image from top to bottom as it's delivered. (BBSers have been privy to this for some time.)

Global History: If a Web user chooses, he or she can select the new Global History feature which will keep an on-disk record of all the Web sites visited in a session. This makes it easy to recall favorite locations.

Loading Local Pages: Prodigy's browser lets users display Web pages stored on a diskette or hard drive, whether they are online or offline.

Delphi

While looking at the Events screen in Delphi's Custom Forums I realized



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BBS

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what a wealth of information (OK, neat stuff) is housed here. For those of you unfamiliar with these, a Custom Forum is a service for personal online networking which enables you to create your own service or "bulletin board" right on Delphi.

With a Custom Forum, you have the ability to exchange messages with specialized groups of Delphi members — small personal groups or interest groups made up of anyone wishing to join in.

Here is just some of the stuff I found — all of which contributes to making Delphi the most personal of all the big services:

From the Custom Forum 427: "Resumes Online has its database up and running. Stop by anytime and upload your resume to the database. We have already had some employers and recruiters visiting us. Now, with direct links to Internet databases, we hope to increase the visibility!"

From Forum 21: "Dennis Tye, an amateur astronomer, user of the Hubble Space Telescope, will be in GALAXIES ASTRONOMY CLUB (21)

on Saturday, April 15th at 10:00pm eastern. Join us with your questions."

From Forum 329: "Agent Vic Levine will discuss what published and aspiring writers should expect from an agency. He is open to questions about anything to do with the craft of writing. For published and aspiring writers of all genres. 4/12/95, 9pm (ET)."

From Forum 65: "On Saturday, April 8, 1995 at 8pm ET, please join us in our remembrance of Leonard Litberg, "RADICAL", co-founder of The Yellow Submarine and beloved member of many realities throughout Delphi, who passed away suddenly on Sunday April 2. The Yellow Submarine forum and conference area will be dedicated to the memory of our RADICAL, I hope that we can each share our tears, our fears, and our love for ourselves, for Len, and for each other."

I also received E-Mail (along with every other Delphi user) from the Big Cheese at Delphi, Dr. Alan Baratz, the service's president. In his note he defends the upcoming change to a graphical interface and Delphi's deci-

sion to select Netscape Navigator as the technology base.

"Many of you wanted to know why we selected Netscape Navigator(TM)," he began. "We licensed Netscape Navigator because it's simply the most advanced graphical Web browser available. Netscape Navigator allows you to easily experience all the multimedia sights and sounds of the World-Wide Web, from graphics to video to sound files. It's truly a state-of-the-art product."

Baratz continued: "Some of you were concerned that a graphical interface might slow you down. While graphical interfaces do require more overhead to run, we're making it a priority for our new interface to perform quickly. The interface will provide continued functionality while downloading, and will allow you to perform off-line functions such as reading and writing email, and viewing Web pages saved to your hard drive.

"At this point, our plan is to also continue offering the existing text-based service as long as there is a significant demand for it." ■■■■■

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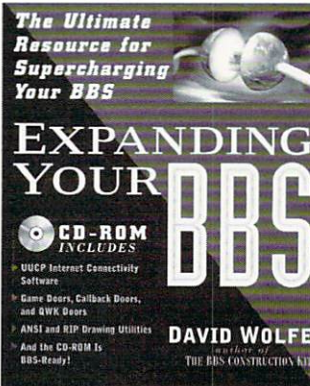
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BY STEVE JANAS

To qualify for possible review in BBS Notebook, call The Livewire BBS at 609.235.5297. From the main menu type ADDBBS and follow the prompts.

The CyberDen

Location: Oakland, CA
Sysop: Peter Stone
BBS Main Access #: 510.633.9811
Modems Supported: Up to 14.4
BBS Software: First Class 2.6

If the BBS universe is the new dominion of pop culture, then California's CyberDen seeks to be its haunted underworld.

Newly transplanted from Marin County to Oakland, the Den (to use the colloquial) attracts a rogue's gallery of artists, musicians, Gen-X types, and varied free spirits drawn by the promise of creative cross-pollination with others of their kind, according to Sysop Peter Stone.

Peter's a bit of a renaissance man, having been as a rock musician, nightclub manager and designer of the Cyberpit displays in the 1993 version of the annual Lollapalooza rock road shows. He says he's designed his board around the image of a colony: a collective of odd, dimly-seen creatures glimpsed in the kind of murky shadows "ordinary" people prefer not to enter. That's why he chose to

design his FirstClass GUI in the image of a bat.

"When people see a den of bats, it's a happy family but it's unusual," Peter says. "It's dark and unusual to a lot of people, but it's a supportive society."

On its three gigabytes of file space, the Den holds the usual assortment of shareware utilities and games. But it also holds a thriving bazaar of counter-cultural music and artwork. Rock bands both professional and amateur use the Internet-connected message area to upload and download pictures of themselves, essential biographical information, and sampled snippets of their music. MIDI keyboard samples are traded back and forth. Underground artists hawk their outre vision, and record labels — mostly small, independent ones — choose the board to set up an online presence.

The file areas are held in bat-shaped icons suspended in the Den's colorful GUI. Peter keeps them separated into a general-access area he calls the Cyberlink, and an area restricted to the Den's 300 registered users, who pay \$10 per month for their full access.

Peter keeps the Den on a Macintosh IIx connected via Ethernet to a Unix-based Spark One Plus machine, which houses the

Cyberlink and will, by the summer, be connected to the Internet by a 128K ISDN line.

He says the daisy-chained arrangement allows for a certain economy by making the volume on both machines' hard drives accessible to callers who either dial up the board's main number or drop in via the Net.

"I didn't want to have 300 to 400MB of data on the Unix machine and have to put the same data on the Mac side as well," Peter says.

The actual entity known as the CyberDen began life in 1989. But Peter's board-tinkering days began well before that, when, barely into his teens, he cobbled together his own BBS software from modified versions of early Apple communications programs. He called his creation the Connector and ran it in the Los Angeles area until his interests took a turn away from computing and into music. He moved to San Francisco, started a keyboard industrial band called Xorcist, and eventually came to realize that the realms of entertainment and computers were heading toward convergence. People into computing and people into noise rock finally seemed to be noticing one another.

"I began to notice that there lacked a central telecommunication

center for such people and decided to set one up," Peter says. "The goal would be to network people active in the underground music and computer scene, exchanging ideas, offering programs to help them create their crafts and to expand their knowledge and resources through this amazing thing called a modem."

At first, Peter ran the CyberDen off of a 286 PC using Waffle BBS software and a single, frequently bottlenecked phone line. After spending some time adding disk space and other upgrades, he decided to make the leap to a system that would be more powerful, "yet less intimidating than a Unix shell solution for my users."

"As powerful as Unix and its interface to the Internet is, it is still too intimidating for most users out there," he says.

After looking at such GUI-based systems as Tele-Finder and NovaLink Pro, Peter settled on FirstClass 2.1 (which he has since upgraded to v2.6) largely because it was available when he needed it, it was reliable and would grow with the board. He has made available to PC callers a Windows version of the client software, although he says he's found the program gets quirky sometimes, especially when dealing with the music files.

"It's got some anomalies," Peter says. "It doesn't support playback of sound like Mac does, but that's something I understand they're working on."

Peter has indicated he may use his FirstClass server as a locus for video/sound conferences once the high-capacity Internet link is set up. It's possible, he says, to host a video/text conference with programs like Cu-SeeMe and a high-speed connection. "Already a friend of mine who runs a nightclub in Los Angeles has set up a computer in the club, hooked it into an IRC channel on the Internet, and welcomes anyone in the world to chat with anyone at the club during the entire night."

Next stop after that is the William Gibson world of console jockeys

jacking into the matrix:

"One day," Peter says, "you can bet we'll be sending over video, audio, and perhaps before I die, with the help of lasers, encoders and decoders, our entire bodies... Well, perhaps in my next life."

Or perhaps in this one.

Political BBS

Sysop: Brian Tafoya

Location: White Rock, NM

BBS Main Access #: 505.672.1665

Modem Supported: 14.4

BBS Software: Spitfire 3.5

For sysop Brian Tafoya, monitoring a political debate on a BBS can be a pretty engaging spectator sport.

He says he often sits in on multi-node chats on his board, which he set up about a year and a half ago to provide a forum for public policy issues in New Mexico, and watches the flurry. His users keep the tone of the debates mostly civil, but occasionally, particularly on hot issues, the exchanges can intensify as Brian watches.

"It can get pretty fun," he says.

Brian launched the board from a 386/33 in his old hometown of Santa Fe back in January of 1994. An electrical engineer at the nearby Los Alamos National Laboratory, Brian says he's always had an interest in computers and bulletin boards. His political inclinations developed as a member of local 611 of the International Union of Electrical Workers; witnessing the politicization of the Net via Usenet newsgroups and commercial online forums gave him the idea for combining his two interests into a single endeavor.

His 400 users include students and political players from the state capitol of Santa Fe, but lately the board's also drawn in researchers from Los Alamos, who tend to be a more conservative bunch.

The two groups have had a few clashes online over environmental issues, Brian says. One issue in particular, involving a proposed nuclear

waste dump in the desert near Carlsbad Caverns, set up a fuss that began reverberating throughout the Spitfire network, for which Brian's board serves as the New Mexico hub. It died down before spreading too far, which is fortunate, Brian says, "because the SF net likes to keep politics out of it."

Of course, the board's not all politics. Since the launch, Brian's upgraded to a 486/66, with 12 gigabytes of games, general interest shareware, and adult GIFs split between two hard drives and two CD-ROM drives.

Three phone lines connect the board to the outside world, but Brian says he'd like to increase to about ten. He says he would prefer to remain within the shareware domain as he expands.

"I think I can get 10 lines with Spitfire without too much trouble," he says. "I'm a strong believer in shareware."

Defcon

Sysop: Mike Christiansen

Location: New Hyde Park, NY

BBS Main Access #: 516.437.1659

Modem Supported: Up to 28.8

BBS Software: Spitfire 3.5

On Long Island's crowded BBS playing field, 16-year-old sysop Mike Christiansen decided he needed an angle to make his board stand out from the rest.

The angle he chose was information services.

"The competition in my area is very fierce, with a lot of big systems," he says. "But there are no information services at all. I needed a niche."

And a niche is what he got.

Mike set up Defcon with more than 27,000 files, including an online reference library containing over 100 literary works. He's got many of the classics covered: *The Red Badge of Courage*, *Moby Dick*, the texts of Presidential speeches and important treaties — anything a high school

CONTINUES ...

student would likely need to complete a research paper.

He's also got about 50 online games — mostly standards like The Legend of Red Dragon — but he says his decision to gear the board more toward students who need a research tool places the games into a distinctly subsidiary role.

Defcon is aimed at new users who may find BBSing unfamiliar terrain, Mike says. Even though the board is set up to serve high schoolers, he says his intention is to attract older, college-age users who would do more than sift through the file areas for downloads that strictly serve their own interests.

"A lot of kids will come on and leech, and that's it," Mike says. "I'd like to get them into the message base, take a look at some of that stuff. It's really interesting."

With that in mind, he's made his board an access point for a number of networks, including Fidonet, the Internet, and RIPnet. Defcon is also a node for The Long Island Network, a web of chats and message systems designed to stitch together the Island's sprawling and diverse communities into a cohesive whole.

Mike says he likes the idea of his board helping to build a unified community.

"The Fidonet could have 200 messages from around the country," he says. "But with this, you can have messages from people who are close to you. If you want to meet them eventually you could."

Defcon is still run off of the same 386 PC on which it was born in August, 1993. It is, in fact, Mike's first computer. He does have plans to upgrade, however.

Sometime this summer, Defcon will move onto a Pentium workstation Mike is planning to buy. He's also planning to add an 18 CD-ROM disk changer and forego the shareware Spitfire software for the commercially-available PC Board. The new system will allow him to grow, he says, and add more Fidonet message conferences, as well as some Usenet groups.

All that can be done on Spitfire, he admits, but it would be more difficult.

"With Spitfire you can get Usenet but you have to go to third party software and all new registration," he says. "PC Board has all that built in."

He says he also plans to turn the board into a business and charge users a \$35 per year subscription fee. About ten paying customers have signed up so far, he says.

One step he's resisting, however, is the temptation to load up the board with new nodes. He says that's the classic example of overweening ambition that often dooms a board to failure.

"I've seen too many boards go down getting too many lines they can't support," he says.

The Vector

Location: Cranford, NJ

Sysops: Sharon and Joseph

Delvecchio

Main Access #s

28.8 BPS: 908.276.4405;

14.4 BPS: 908.272.1911

BBS Software: Remote Access 2.01

When searching about for a way to make his board distinctive, Sysop Joseph Delvecchio hit upon the idea of customer service. He decided to make the Vector a friendly oasis in the bewildering BBS jungle, free of the God-complex attitude exhibited sometimes by sysops who forget that it is a human being sitting at the other end of the line.

"We tend to be more friendly and understanding toward new callers. I don't mind walking a person step by step through downloads, uploads," Joseph says. "I was a new caller once, and someone helped me out, and I don't mind doing the same for others."

Joseph says his responsiveness to caller suggestions led him to drop adult files from the board when they asked him to. That was fine by him. Underage interlopers were making the files more trouble than they were worth, he says.

"I don't need 15-year-olds trying to get adult material and me getting harassed by parents," he says. "That's not one of the games I like to play."

That move caused him to lose a few users out for a night of saucy walking on the online wild side, but Joseph says it also allowed him to focus on the board's core constituency: serving as a message forum.

The Vector serves as a node for eight message networks, he says, including Fidonet, a music network and a native American network.

There are file areas as well: 500 MB and one CD-ROM's worth. The board also has games, accessible through one of 30 Doors.

Joseph says his motivation to enter the BBS world was provided by logging onto other boards.

"I was calling around and said I could do this, too, and I did," he says.

He launched the Vector on a 386 PC with a 2400 modem, and within a year had upgraded to a 486. He now runs the board off the same machine, but has added a second phone line and has upgraded his modems to support 14.4 and 28.8 data transfer rates.

By summer, Joseph will have added a new service to his board: a financial newsletter.

Accessible through the message menu, the newsletter will contain Joseph's opinions on stocks, bonds and other financial matters. It's a good fit with his profession, Joseph says. He works as a financial analyst for the Dow Jones Company, working a 3 to 11 p.m. shift while his sister Sharon stays home to tend the board.

He says it's conceivable the board might end up primarily a financial services board. Or the Vector may stay as it is, and Joseph will spin the financial services idea into a new board. It depends on the users, Joseph says.

"I move by demand." ■■■■

Steve Janas is editor and co-founder of Nexus Six magazine, the journal of gutter-tech. He welcomes news of new and noteworthy boards. He can be contacted at janas@aol.com.

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FidoNet import/export	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PostLink (RIME) support	Yes	Extra	Yes	Extra	No
Includes RIPscrip menus	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Novell/DOS LAN support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Enhanced CD-ROM support	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Incoming FAX support	Yes	No	No	No	No
Chat between doors	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Bidirectional file transfers	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
DOS door support	11 types	2 types	2 types	No	No
FILE.ID.DIZ support	Yes	Extra	Yes	Yes	No
Offline NetMail	Yes	Yes	Extra	No	Yes
Offline/Remote file requests	Yes	No	No	No	No
Real-time configuration	Yes	No	Yes	No	No

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If you haven't checked out Synchronet yet, crank up your modem and download a demo. There isn't a faster, more feature rich BBS available anywhere from anyone. Synchronet combines the robust interactive nature of a multiuser BBS with the speed, power and flexibility of a multinode system.

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IPhone, Therefore I Am

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Hello? Hello?
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KEYWORDS

Digital voices
Where to get IPhone
and how to use it

Yes, I said verbal.

If by now you haven't heard about it, I'm referring to what's become all the rage on the Internet over the past several months; a miracle that lets you carry on a conversation with people all around the world with a local "call." It's called Internet Phone, or IPhone, and if you're not using it now, chances are you will be soon.

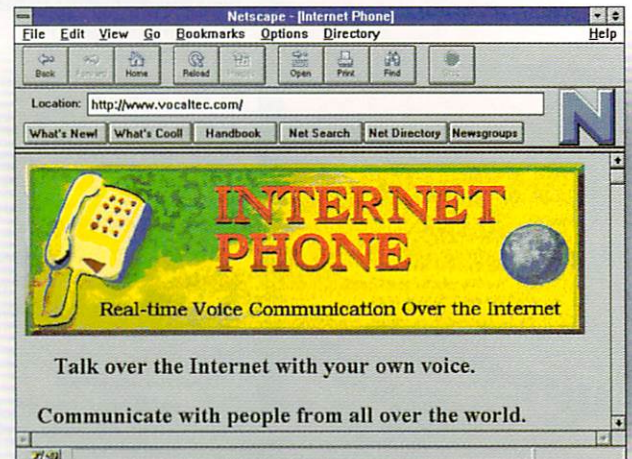
Inside the IPhone

Are you familiar with IRC? Internet Relay Chat is a great way to have a conversation with two, three, or even 20 people at one time. IRC users telnet in from around the world, search the available rooms for a favorite topic, and then join in to type-chat to others. Internet Phone uses these same principles, only it's the sound of a voice you hear and not just key-clicks.

First, you have to get a copy of the program and install it (FTP to <ftp.vocaltec.com/pub/iphone08.exe>).

Once that's done, connect to one of the following IRC phone servers:

iphone.interserv.net (San Francisco) 6670.



iphone.pulver.com (Long Island) 6670.

iphone.vocaltec.com — VocalTec's Server (Washington DC) 6670.

iphone.wau.nl — Wageningen Agricultural University (the Netherlands) 6670.

iphone.iaccess.com.au — Internet Access Australia Pty Ltd, 6670.

iphone.fast.net, 6670.

As you can see, you'll connect to port 6670 each time, which has been reserved for Internet Phone services. When you first run IPhone, you'll be asked to input information such as your name, phone number, etc., which will be used to identify you to others at the IRC site. Once you're connected, simply pick out someone to talk to, double-click on their name, and they'll receive a notice that someone wishes to speak with them.

The demonstration version of the

program (see below) is limited to sending 60 seconds of speech. That's actually a lot more time than it might appear. If you have a series of short questions/replies, you could use the program for two or three minutes.

Bandwidth? No problem

You would think that transferring voice data over the Internet would take up a huge amount of bandwidth, right? According to VocalTec, however, transmitting voice takes up less than 8K total space. That means you can use Internet Phone on a 14.4K modem as well as from a direct Ethernet connection. I tried both ways, and it is true — there is no noticeable quality difference using Internet Phone via modem or ethernet.

Trying to find a downside, I thought that another problem could arise when an IRC site becomes heavily loaded. But this is not a problem either, since the IRC site is used more like a bulletin board than a transmission medium. So when you connect to someone in California from New York, (via the site in Washington) the IRC site transfers the appropriate information to each user's PC. Conversation goes to and from IP numbers directly, without having to go through an overloaded IRC channel.

Anyone can use Internet Phone as it is, but I found a few tricks that really make it sing. First: the better the equipment, the better the sound quality. When I first played with Internet Phone, I was using one of the original Sound Blasters in 8-bit mono mode and with the el-cheapo microphone included. Talking to my co-worker in the next room sounded garbled, but we could still understand each other. Then I went to another computer with a Sound Blaster 16-bit card and a high-quality microphone (\$40 at Radio Shack). Now others could hear me quite clearly, although my voice did have a slight metallic tinge to it — Remember using two tin cans connected by a string as a kid?

Internet Phone sounds better than the twine and soup-can method — and it's certainly much more practical

for talking to someone miles, even continents away.

What you need

To run Internet Phone, you will need a multimedia machine. VocalTec recommends at least a 486SX PC at 25MHz and eight megs of RAM. You'll need Windows 3.1, a TCP/IP Internet connection with Winsock 1.1 compliance, and a standard Windows-compatible audio board, microphone, and speaker. A 14.4K connection will work, although certainly response times will be slower than with a full Ethernet connection or 28.8.

In order to find out more about Internet Phone, use Mosaic or your favorite Web browser to connect to VocalTec's home page, <http://www.vocaltec.com>.

Browsing through these home pages will reveal more about Internet Phone and a couple of their other network programs.

As for actually running the program, the executable you downloaded will extract it into a directory, generally IPHONE, and you can add a Windows icon manually.

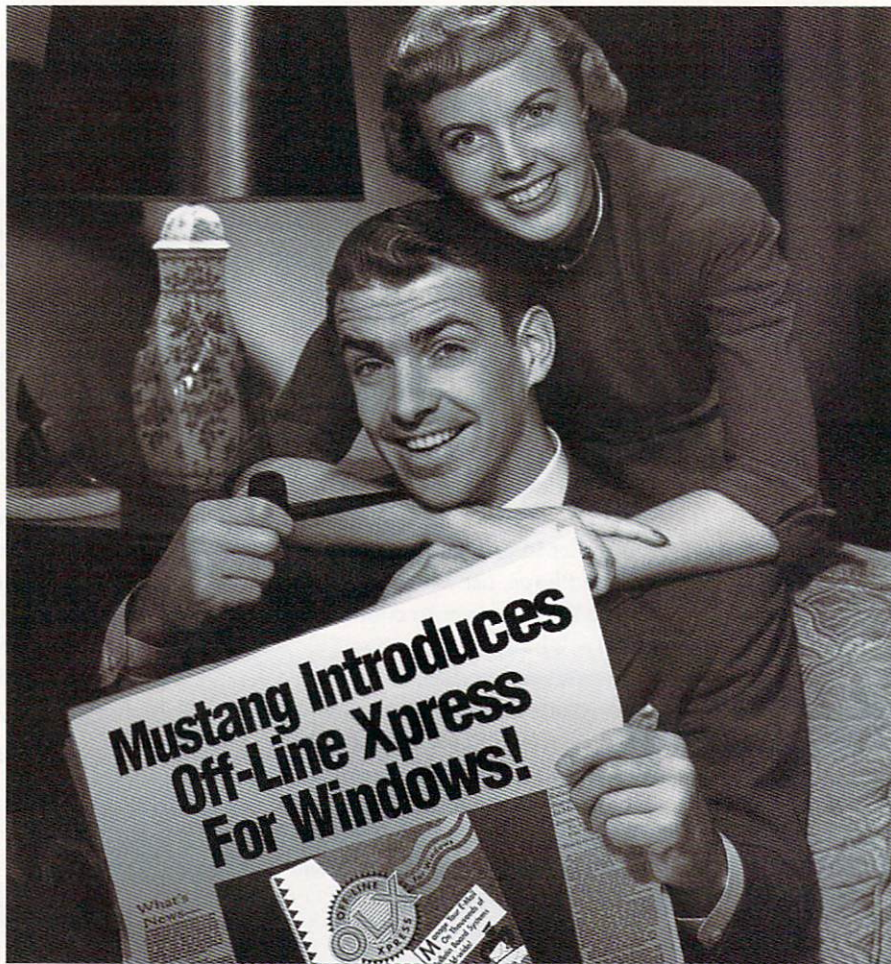
The cost for this gem is \$59. Since this program looked more like shareware, I thought that was a hefty price. But VocalTec has put a lot of work into getting this whole system up and running, and obviously seems committed to expanding its list of Internet Phone sites.

If you have friends abroad who can use this program, just imagine the savings in your phone bill. It's a little too early for the telephone companies to worry. After all, direct IP connections certainly aren't in a majority of households, and the quality isn't the best. But it's obvious that in a few years, when more advanced versions of Internet Phone are released, this may be the new way to communicate.

VocalTec, Inc., located in Northvale, NJ, can be reached by voice — the old way — at 201.768.9400. ■■■■■

Mike Robinson
mrobinson@wharton.upenn.edu





More Great News From The Communications Experts.



Mustang Software announces the newest addition to its growing family of online products: **Off-Line Xpress (OLX) for Windows v. 1.0.**

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Hey, How Do I Dial?

A map for the
modem/term minefield

A terminal program (or term for short) set up correctly is a joy to use. An incorrectly configured term, to put it lightly, can cause your time online to be less than the pleasurable experience it's meant to be. For new users, the process of configuring a terminal program can seem like a daunting minefield, but with a few hints and suggestions, it can become much easier.

CONTINUES ...

Term programs should be configured from the general to the specific. For instance, what your modem is capable of should be configured first. With that out of the way, specific items — like your personal preferences or the settings you need when calling specific bulletin boards — should be activated.

Hardcopy

First and foremost, print the documentation for the term you want to use. Take the manual or printed docs and walk away from your computer to read it. Grab a pen or pencil and make notes to yourself as you go. Use Post-it notes in the margins or as bookmarks for details you think you might want to look up later, such as the exact filenames for character sets for Desterm, or other details.

Not everything you read is going to make sense, mind you, especially if you've never used a modem before. Some things really do take experience before making any sense at all, but having read the documentation you'll be able to say "Aha!" later when it finally clicks.

I know it's tempting to just skim the manual in a rush to get online, but do yourself a favor and try to actually digest it. Once you've at least made an effort to read the docs (just looking at the page numbers and headings doesn't count), you can begin to configure the term program and use your notes as points of reference. Do keep the documentation close by, as you will likely need to refer to them again.

Softcopy

Make a backup copy of the original term program and use the backup instead of the original so you'll always have the original available should you need it. Also, after you've configured the term to your liking and have tested it, make a backup copy of this, too. That way should something happen to the disk you're using, you won't have to go through the entire configuration process from scratch.

When you begin the configuration process, don't start changing every single default setting. The defaults are usually (but not always) the most beneficial for that particular term program.

The first thing you will need to change is information about your modem. Check that the term program is set to the highest baud rate the modem can use. If it's a 2400 baud modem, this is the highest. For higher speed modems, start with 19.2K or 38.8K, depending on what the term program supports. If you use a Swiftlink or HART cartridge, and the term program has the option of enabling this, be sure to do so. A few programs such as Desterm and Fritzterm automatically recognize these cartridges without user intervention. Novaterm has an option in its setup menu, and Dialogue128 has a completely different version of the program (it's on side two of the disk, so be sure to load the correct disk side). It's also worth noting that Dialogue128 has a program that must be run first to create a "work disk," which you'll use whenever you load the program instead of the original disk. The setup program asks about the type of modem and about the type of 128 that you have, due to the fact the 128 can have either 16K or 64K VDC memory.

After you've told the term program what kind of modem you're using, its baud rate and other details, you will need to make sure the modem and term program are indeed communicating with each other. In the terminal area (it usually looks like a big blank screen with a few lines of information at the top) type AT <return>. If you don't see what you've typed, try typing ATE1 <return>, and then key AT again. You should now see what you've typed and the modem should respond by displaying an "OK" on the screen. If it appears that the modem and term program are still not communicating with each other, don't panic. There are still several things to check.

• Some term programs, such as Novaterm and Desterm, have an option for modem style called "Hayes Inverted," or something similar. Select this, then go back to the terminal to see if the modem and term program are now communicating. The "Inverted" option really has nothing to do with the modem itself, but is strictly a Commodore thing in our term programs because of the differences in the way CBM interfaces interpret data

from the modem. If the modem and term still aren't communicating, go back and change the option to regular Hayes.

• Take a look at the modem and its lights. You should see letters near the lights, one of which will be either "DTR" (for Data Terminal Ready), or "MR" (for Modem Ready). The light for this should be on. If not, from the terminal, type AT&D2 <return>. The light for DTR (or MR) should come on, and the modem should respond with "OK".

• The next check is the DCD (Data Carrier Detect) setting the modem is currently using. Should the terminal tell you that you are "online" when you know for a fact you're not, you will need to change this, as the modem won't dial out if it thinks you are already online. From the terminal, type AT&C1 <return>. The modem will probably type back "OK" and the light for CD (or DCD) should change on the modem (the light should be OFF), and most importantly, the term program should show you in its status line that you are NOT online.

Strings attached

You could use the same commands (AT&C1 if you've changed only the carrier detect status for the modem, AT&C1&D2 if you've changed BOTH) as part of the "initialization string" in the term program. The initialization string is a command (or several commands) sent to the modem each time you load the program.

There are a few reasons why you may wish to store certain modem settings in the modem's non-volatile RAM (NVRAM) — assuming it has this feature — one being that it will use this each time you turn the modem on. For instance, Dialogue128 expects the modem to be configured so that the DCD follows carrier. If the modem is set so that DCD is always on, Dialogue assumes that you are already online and won't allow you to send commands to the modem at all from the terminal. It checks the carrier detect status before sending the initialization string, too, so if the modem is showing that it's online, Dialogue doesn't send the initialization string to the modem

— a real Catch-22. You may need to use another term program that will send commands to the modem to change this before you can use Dialogue, and you will definitely want the modem to have this as a stored default.

To do this, type the command AT&C1 to the modem and then type AT&W, which stores the current modem configuration in its non-volatile RAM.

Another important point concerning your modem and term program is that if you bought a used modem, it may well be configured for the previous owner, and not function as you (or the term program you're using) expect. A quick way to solve this and start from scratch is to type AT&F, which should set the modem's configuration back to its factory defaults. You might need to check with your modem manual, as it could have a slightly different command to accomplish the same.

Should you do this, be aware that you may have to go through the above to change the DCD or DTR settings

again, but this is one sure way of setting your modem back to square one.

Down and dirty

Now that you have your modem and the term program communicating with each other, you can get down to the nitty gritty of configuring the term program.

Some of these configurations may involve making changes to both the term program and the modem's configuration. For instance, if the modem and term are both capable of using CTS/RTS flow control, be sure to turn this setting on in the term program and see that the modem is configured to use it.

Check the manual for the command, and then use this as part of the initialization string in the term program, or, once again, you could save it within the modem itself just as I described for the DCD or DTR settings. It's very likely there will be options in the term program that you won't understand, such as the differences between XON/XOFF flow control and CTS/RTS flow control — the impor-

tant thing here is that both the modem and the term program use the same methods. And where possible, CTS/RTS is preferred.

As for other perplexing options, just leave them as they are for now and adjust them later as needed.

Something else worth noting is which disk drive the program will be looking to for specific uses. That is, some terms (notably Desterm and Novaterm) allow different drives to be used for uploads, downloads, and buffer captures. If you have more than one disk drive, have your fastest drive be your "user" drive for the uploads and downloads, and the slower one for your terminal program. Similarly, if you have only one disk drive, be sure that the term program looks to the same drive number for everything.

When you get to the stage where you can add BBS phone numbers to the term's phone book, you may find that some ask you many of the same questions you've answered for your general

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setup. This is because the places you call can require many changes to the term program, and once you've set this up for each place you call, you need not make changes to the general settings you have for the term.

Do your homework

If you've never called a BBS, best thing to do now is find out as much as possible about a board you'd like to call. This will give you a jump-start by allowing you to launch with appropriate settings, and avoid playing the game of catch-up. This information can sometimes be found in advertisements for the BBS or online service — just look in the ad for details or call the voice support line (if one is listed).

And if you have friends who've been BBSing and are anxiously waiting your arrival on a particular BBS, now is a good time to squeeze them for advice. Find out the phone number for the BBS, the highest (and lowest) baud rates it uses, and then ask what "emulation" you need to use. Should they give you a blank stare, this is a good time to practice "techno-babble" — take a deep breath and ask if the BBS uses ANSI, ASCII, or Commodore Color Graphics. If they don't know, all is not lost, it just means you need to do some experimenting.

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In general, the things you'll need to know before dialing include the emulation and communications parameters (which look like 8N1, 7E1 or 7O1 — that's an "O", as in the word "Odd"). 8N1 is a very common parameter so try this first. It may appear in the term program as either one complete entry allowing different choices, or as three different settings which would be:

Data Bits: 8 or 7

Parity: None, Even, or Odd, which could be shown as N, E or O.

Stop Bits: almost always 1.

For setting up to call a Commodore BBS, you might start with 2400 baud (or 1200 if 2400 doesn't work the first try) and Commodore Color/Graphics emulation. For C=64 BBSs, set it for 40 columns. When calling a PC-based BBS, start off with the highest baud rate your modem (and term) will allow, ANSI emulation and, if possible, 80 columns. If setting up for an online service, start with the highest baud rate your modem/term permits, ASCII (sometimes called "Standard") emulation and either 40 or 80 columns, depending on whether you're using a 64 or 128. GENie, unlike BBS systems, expects you to have your terminal/modem set to Half Duplex. If you don't find "Duplex" in the terminal settings, look for "Echo" and set it to "on". Most other places you call will likely require the echo set to "off" or the Duplex as "full".

Now that you've configured your term program, don't forget to save it! Find the option to save your configurations within the program and do it BEFORE conducting any tests — save it before getting up for a cup of coffee, save it before taking another breath.

Also, remember that after you've made changes to your setup you will need to hit "save" so they'll be there when you next load the software. I may seem to be repeating myself, but from experience I know how easy it is to make a few changes, call a BBS with success and then exit the term program without saving the changes. If possible, it's also advisable to print the phone book you've set up so you can have the phone numbers and passwords for use

in other term programs. Since I use and test many different programs, I've found this to be invaluable.

When you get online, you'll find that even the BBS you call has options you can configure for optimum communications. Chances are, if you've never called the BBS before, as part of the sign-on procedure you'll be asked about your preferences (which will be saved on the board) so the next time you log on you're all set. Most BBSs also have a menu option so you can change these settings, should you ever wish to do so. This can be quite convenient if you change term programs or switch from a 64 to a 128 system.

I'd like to tell you that everything will work perfectly from the first time you call a BBS (especially if you've read this far), but Murphy dictates that this won't always be the case. Again, it could be time to play the trial and error game.

Chances are you'll have to make some changes to your configurations in the term program, modem or even the BBS system you call. Start with what you have the most control over (the term program) and then go about it systematically, as it can really get difficult to keep track of changes you've made if you modify several at a time. Using this method, it will be much easier to exclaim that "Aha!" when you hit the right adjustment.

What you change depends on the problems you have, which could be anything from choosing the wrong terminal emulation (you connect to the BBS but see junk on the screen instead of words) to the wrong baud rate (the modem tries to connect but doesn't). If you change one item and find it doesn't work or has no apparent effect, change it back to what you had before and try something else.

And once again, when it's all to your satisfaction, don't forget to save your settings. ■■■■

Gaelyne Moranec is a freelance writer investigating Commodore developments in Australia. She can usually be found in the Fidonet CBM echo. Comments or suggestions can be sent to 1:239/200.999, 3:800/809.128; Internet: gaelyne.moranec@aftrs.edu.au; or, in care of this publication.

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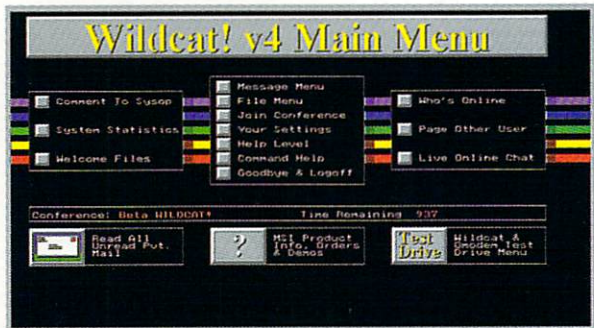
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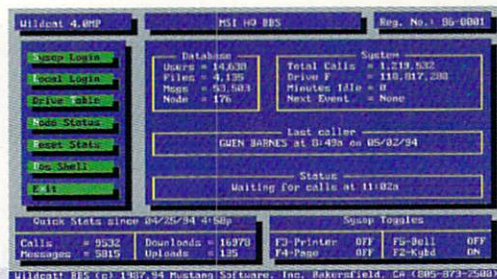
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Virtual Gremlins

These utilities could save you more than time

Running a BBS can be exhausting, time-consuming work — even on the Mac. And until recently, there's been little any system operator could do to lighten his load. Now, however, we can seek the help of some "savior" utilities. I've chosen a few that I think are especially applicable to BBSers on both sides of the host. Give them a try if you're feeling the pinch of too much to do in too little time.

KEYWORDS

Mounting images
Automate downloads
Netscape nifties

Expanding and Mounting

Ever get a bunch of files that you want to decompress simultaneously? Time was, you'd have had to run Compact Pro or StuffIt, then choose and expand one file at a time.

StuffIt Expander changes all that. SE is a drag-and-drop utility that expands AppleLink packages, StuffIt and Compact Pro archives, and BinHex files.

Highlight several files at once by holding down the Shift key while clicking on the different files, drag over to StuffIt Expander until it's highlighted, and release. That's it!

StuffIt Expander is freeware, and should be version 3.0.7 or better.

If you're tired of creating floppies from images, as I was, you need **ShrinkWrap**.

ShrinkWrap is another drag-and-drop freeware utility that allows you to mount images

as disks on your desktop, or create images from floppies without the headaches. It supports almost all known image file formats and AppleScript.

Shrinkwrap is cool because you can drag multiple images of, say, installation disks, mount them (which is done in memory), then install your software

without having to create any install disks on floppies. Also, since it's an application and not a control panel, it takes no memory until you mount the images, and it will not cause any INIT conflicts.

This excellent application by Chad Magendanz can be found on the Internet, BBSs and online services. The current version is 1.3.2 or greater.

Raiding the Enemy Camp

Having trouble finding quality clip art and stunning graphics for your board? Why not raid the PC boards?

Before you think I've flipped, check out **GraphicConverter** by Stefan Brix. GraphicConverter allows you to take graphics from other platforms (or even from the Mac) and convert them to several different formats for Macintosh.

It can also help you create graphics for your PC users. In fact, you can have the same clip art for both your Mac and PC callers.

The latest version of GraphicConverter should be version 2.1 or greater.

If you retrieve files from PC BBSs, you will no doubt have to learn to deal with line breaks and ASCII characters. Or you can get a copy of **Tower of Babel**. Tower of Babel



StuffIt Expander™



ShrinkWrap™



GraphicConverter



Tower of Babel

allows you to convert plain text files between different system platforms. It converts line break characters as well as high (>127) and low (<32) ASCII characters (diacritical and graphic characters). Supported platforms include Macintosh, DOS, Windows, Unix, Atari ST and all systems that use similar ASCII encodings (NeXT, Amiga, etc.). What's cool here is that you can convert from any platform to any of the other platforms. Tower of Babel requires System 7 or better. It also runs native on Power Macs.

Speed It Up, Mac

If you want to speed up the rate of communications on your Power Mac or AV — and who doesn't? — you might do well to get a hold of **SerialSpeed**. SerialSpeed 230 is a Shareware application that allows any Power Macintosh or "AV" class Mac to transmit and receive serial port data at 230,000 bps (4 times faster than the usual maximum). It's also compatible with most existing telecommunication packages and high-speed modems.



SerialSpeed 230

Set It and Forget It

Using an Internet account to download files for your BBS sounds like a wise move. The reason it's not is because everyone else is doing it — making for clogged servers and frustrated sysops. If you like retrying and redialing *ad infinitum*, go ahead. The rest of us will get the **Get 'Em** AppleScript applet from the Info-Mac site.

This baby allows you to automate downloads by simply dropping a text file containing addresses or Anarchie Bookmark files onto the applet and it will attempt to download every item up to 100 times. After it runs, the text/bookmark file will contain only those items that could not be successfully downloaded. Say good night to 3 a.m. downloads.

Speaking of using your Internet account, if you connect to your provider using PPP, you probably get tired of having to go to the "Config



Get 'Em

PPP" control panel to close your connection. **PPPfloater** eliminates that hassle. A small System Extension that will automatically open a floating window whenever you open a MacPPP connection, PPPfloater allows you to "hard close" your connection while displaying the amount of time you have been online since the connection was last opened. PPPfloater requires System 7.1 or better.

If you like the World Wide Web browser Netscape (and few don't) but want to modify its appearance, a couple of tools called **Netscape Enhancer** and **Netscape-rainbow-circle-20** will do the trick. Netscape Enhancer is a patch to Netscape 1.0 or 1.1. It replaces some of the art and startup screen with other neat artwork, replaces the pulsing "N", and adds some helpful menu commands.

Enhancer does require ResEdit to install the patch, however, so you'll have to know how to use ResEdit.

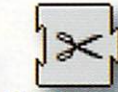
Netscape-rainbow-circle-20 contains a series of color icons to replace the "throbbing N" in Netscape. Instead of the pulsating N, you get a rainbow-colored circle that spins around. An automatic patching utility is included for Netscape 1.0N. To patch Netscape 1.1, you'll need to use ResEdit again.

All Backed Up

Backing up files is enough of a toil. Throw in the sysop's duty of backing up host software to another Mac while trying to keep the latest files secure could put some of us over the edge.

Synk offers an end to our suffering.

A folder backup and synchronization program, Synk lets you have the same files on both systems. It also allows you to resolve aliases for backup so you can have a folder full of aliases to other files, or folders that will also be synchronized. Look for version 1.0.6 or higher.



PPPfloater



Netscape Enhancer



NRC 2.0 readme



Synk 1.0.6

Hope these utilities alleviate the stress long enough for your hair to come back in. If you're still in a bind, drop me an e-note. The mail bag is usually pretty full, but I'll get to it.

July mail:

Q: I have a Performa 630 that just keeps beeping at me. What causes this?

A: I've seen this on several of the Quadra 630s. The cause is actually quite funny, and benign. It seems the volume controls on the front panel sometimes get stuck. If the "up" volume button gets stuck, the Mac keeps trying to turn the volume up. Once you reach max volume, the Mac starts to alert you by beeping. If the built-in volume sound level for the alerts (which can be found in the Sound control panel) is set to zero, then the menu bar will start flashing. You need to look very closely at the buttons to see if they're stuck. Give the button a whack to pop it loose, and your problem is solved!

Q: My Mac takes forever to boot up. I'm running System 7.5. What's the deal?

A: I've had others complain of slow startup times. I looked out to the Internet for an answer to this one, and I found it in a copy of the Info-Mac Digest, which is a volunteer effort. The Info-Mac Archive is available at sites around the world.

If you have an alias to your hard disk in the Apple Menu, take it out of your Apple Menu Items folder (found in your System Folder) and reboot. Apparently System 7.5 builds a list of all the paths available from the Apple Menu down to five levels deep on every startup. Apple has a Technical Note ("System 7.5 and Long Startup Times") out on this.

If that doesn't work, and you're using file sharing, the Technical Note also suggests trashing the (invisible) AppleShare PDS file and letting your Mac automatically recreate a new one.

Michael A. Kuykendall has written for several computer publications and is currently sysop of the Online Macintosh Users Group. The Group's BBS can be reached at 404.988.9904. Comments and or suggestions may be sent via the BBS or to andykirk@aol.com.

"Recipe Ploy" Returns

That old excuse for buying a computer may be worth its salt — and pepper — after all

MEAL MASTER v8.02

MM802.ZIP

by Scott Welliver

For many of us, one of the arguments for getting that first PC was to have a means of collecting and filing all of our recipes in one place.

But, like balancing the checkbook on the computer (remember that ploy?), most found it more trouble than it was worth.

MEAL MASTER remedies that with the most important of ingredients: simplicity.

MEAL MASTER has been around for several years, enjoying a very loyal following. It lacks some of the fancy "bells and whistles" resident in some of the newer recipe database programs, but it makes up for that with the enormous amount of recipes available for it.

MEAL MASTER couldn't be easier to use. The best way to start is to import the sample recipe file included in the archive. Once the program is started for the first time, and all the necessary files are created, choose Utilities from the main menu. From there, select Import. You'll be asked for

a file name (or hit F1 for a list of files).

Select SAMPLE.TXT and start your import. Within a few seconds you'll have 35 tasty recipes to get you cooking. Then it's up to you to either type in your own, or choose from the many



thousands of recipes available on your favorite BBS. You can even convert recipes generated by other programs.

MEAL MASTER will hold up to 60,000 recipes (5,000 in the shareware version). That should be enough for just about anybody!

I imported almost 5,000 and the entire database took up about nine megabytes of hard drive space — not bad considering the amount of information stored.

Another benefit of MEAL MASTER is its searching prowess. Users can

search by title, category, or even ingredient. Want to find a recipe using your favorite vegetable? No problem. Once the search is complete, you can print out the selected recipe and take it to the kitchen.

There's really so much more to it, but you'll have to play around with the program to really appreciate it.

If keeping recipes on your computer is one of those things you've been meaning to attempt again, try MEAL MASTER.

MEAL MASTER will work on just about any DOS compatible machine with a color or monochrome monitor. Registration is \$39.

The Birthday Chronicle First Name Almanac v3.1.7s

TBCWIN.ZIP

FNA317S.ZIP

By Ken Kirkpatrick

If you've ever thought about using your computer to make a few bucks on the side... welcome to the majority.

If you've gone no further than thinking about it, however, THE BIRTHDAY CHRONICLE (TBC) and THE FIRST NAME ALMANAC (FNA) could be just what you need.

These two Windows programs create commercial quality printouts suit-

able for framing (depending on your printer, of course). FNA will print out, in calligraphy style, the meaning of more than 14,500 names. It also lists your "personal characteristics" based on your birth date, such as personality, relationships and career — it even picks your "lucky numbers". The finished product is pretty slick and ready for market.

FNA also allows you to show two names per page, which might be nice for weddings and anniversaries. And along with those names you can add an appropriate graphic.

Though it might seem the program would be complicated to new users, I'm sure even someone with no computer experience could use this. Just type in a first name, sex, date of birth, and click on the print button. That's all there is to it.

As for TBC, according to the documentation it "makes a commercial quality printout of a mini newspaper front page of when you were born, graphics and all!"

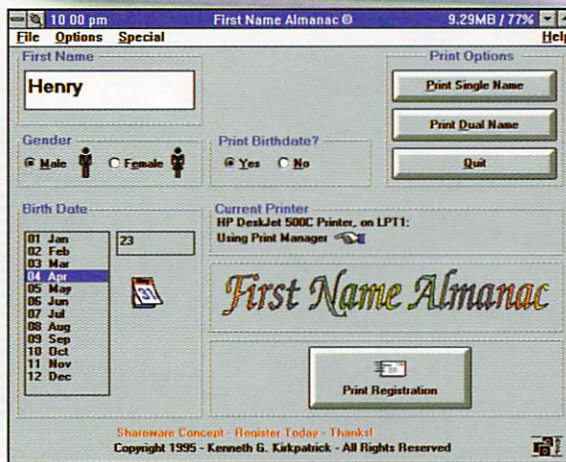
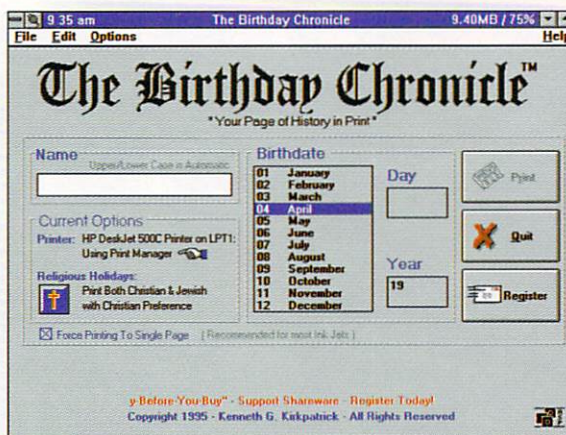
Indeed, the output truly does resemble the front page of a newspaper, with graphics, headlines and even the weather forecast. Other "news" articles cover such topics as news around the world, top music hits and other data from the year you were born, along with a list of people who share your birthday.

Like FNA, TBC is a breeze to use. All you do is type in the first and last name, the date of birth, and print.

DOS versions of these two programs also exist, but you'll need a laser printer. The Windows version lets you use whatever you've set as a default in Windows. With my Deskjet, the output was superb. I'm not sure how a dot matrix printer would work, however, but it wouldn't hurt to try.

The shareware versions print "evaluation copy" in watermark form across the page, so they would be unsuitable for sale. However, it will at least show you what the programs can do for you.

Registration is \$49.95 for each pro-



gram, but with some effort they could pay for themselves before your next birthday. Take a look.

FTP Emcee v1.0

EMCEE10.ZIP

By J.J. Heim

So you have Internet access and now you want to download from some of the ever-expanding number of FTP sites. But you know ftp-ing can get complicated and tedious. EMCEE by J.J. Heim simplifies the task.

Emcee is not a TCP/IP stack, but rather a smart interface used directly over a Unix or similar dial-up shell account.

Setting up EMCEE takes just a few minutes. All you need to do is tell it your modem port, email address, and the host prompt. There are a few other configurations that you can change, but

the defaults should work just fine. (The .DOC files explain each in detail.)

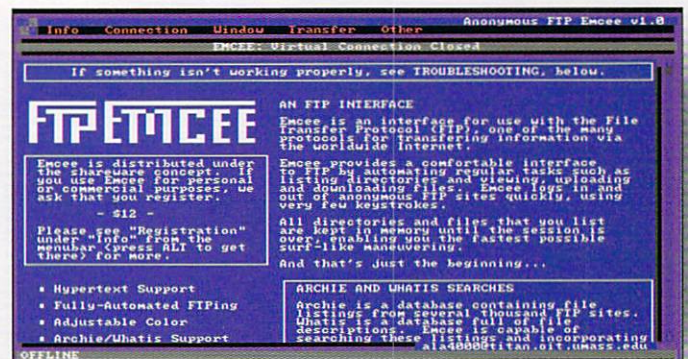
EMCEE is not a stand-alone program. You must first connect to your host, then drop to DOS (without breaking the connection) and load EMCEE. Once loaded, you'll be shown your "personal directory".

This is a list of sites that you can add to or edit until you have a good base of FTP sources. Cursor down to a site name and hit ENTER. If all goes well, EMCEE will send the necessary information to get you connected. You then have a list of available directories on that server. Now, move your cursor to the directory you want (usually PUB) and hit return again. If you see a file you want to download, position your cursor to the filename and hit return. What could be easier? The file is then sent to your directory at your host to be downloaded later. You can also view text files such as README's or INDEX files.

When you're finished at that particular site, hit F8 and you're back to your "personal directory". Here you can either choose another site or exit EMCEE back to the terminal program. Now you can use your terminal program to download the files to your PC.

EMCEE certainly takes some of the hassle out of getting files from anonymous FTP sites. There are other things that you can do as well, and all is explained nicely in the documentation.

A very reasonable registration of \$12



also gets you ARCHIE/WHATIS options. If you use FTP from a shell account, you have to have this program. ■■■■

Hank Hurteau can be reached at 413-527-8977 (BBS) or unkhank@crocker.com.



Technical Support

Modem manufacturers are called, questioned (and pestered) with some surprising results.

Ring...ring... Thank you for calling Mage Support. Please select from the following list.

Choose 1 for problems with spells of immortality, choose 2 for questions about manipulation of cosmic fabric ...

As I sat listening to this, I realized no good review of a product is complete without a critical look at the support one can expect from that product's makers.

Sometimes excellent support goes hand-in-hand with excellent products. Other times it can make up for a less-than-superior product.

Let's see how the popular manufacturers measured up to my staff of truth (and patience).

To put things on an even keel, I called each support environment during their worst times — lunch! Let's face it, when do most of us call?

Over the span of two weeks I dialed each company at least five times. Where busy signals were encountered, I called as many as 100 times (in the case of PPI) before either getting in or giving up.

Similarly, I tested support BBSs, fax-on-demand systems, and Internet sites for accessibility and reliability. If alternative support methods were never accessed, I left them off my list of features below.

The companies are listed in alphabetical order.

Hayes Corp.

The one-time market leader generally provides quality support. I was always able to get through to their voice support with average hold times of five minutes or less. The worst case was a bit over 10 minutes. This is quite commendable in an industry that doesn't always provide adequate voice support. The technical staff was knowledgeable about their own products, but lacked some knowledge of their competition.

The 12-line TBBS toll-free BBS number is strictly a sales/marketing mechanism, so don't go looking there for technical assistance. The four-line TBBS main board was typically busy, but once you get in it's a good place for timely assistance.

I found staff as well as users willing to help with questions. Average message turnaround seems to be in the day or two range, and message traffic on the board is medium, so reading the base every so often is not overly taxing. Internet support for Hayes is a rather dilapidated gopher site, and as such I really don't consider it an Internet sup-

CONTINUES ...

TABLE I — SYSOPS HIGH-SPEED MODEM DISCOUNTS BY VENDOR AND MODEL TYPE

VENDOR/ PRODUCT	14.4K V.32bis INTERNAL	14.4K V.32bis EXTERNAL	V.32TERBO, V.FC, V.34 INTERNAL	V.32TERBO, V.FC V.34 EXTERNAL
AT&T Paradyne	3721-B1-001* \$150	3710-A1-201* \$165 PC; \$190 Mac	\$175	N/A
CPI/ ViVa	ViVa 14.4 \$180	ViVa 14.4 \$196	N/A	N/A
Hayes Corp	Optima 144B* \$179	Ultra 144 \$249 Optima 144+FAX* \$179 PC; \$179 Mac	N/A	Optima 288+FAX v.FC 28.8k \$259
Intel	SatisFax/400 \$249 Faxmodem 144i \$99	14.4 EX \$269 SatisFAX/400e* \$245 Faxmodem 144e \$109	N/A	N/A
Microcom	N/A	N/A	N/A	DeskPorte FAST v.FC 28.8k \$249 TravelPorte FAST v.FC 28.8k \$249
MultiTech	MT1432BC \$400 MT1432ES \$400 MCA	MT1432BA* \$400 MT1432MU* \$300 MT1432BL* \$450 MT1432PCS \$575	N/A	N/A
Practical Peripherals	N/A	PM14400FXSA* \$215 PM14400FXMT* \$155	N/A	N/A
Supra Corp	SupraFAXModem* \$109	SupraFAXModem* \$139	\$159	Supra V34 \$179
USRobotics	N/A	N/A	N/A	HST V.Everything V.34, VFC, FAX* \$249
Ven-Tel	PCM144FAX* \$195 PCMV.32bis* \$480 MCM144FAX* \$380 MCA	EC144FAX* \$215 ECV.32bis* \$525 RMV.32bis II* \$425	N/A	N/A
Zoom Telephonics	VFP V.32Bis* \$99	VFX V.32Bis* \$119 PC; \$130 Mac	VFP V.FC 24k \$99 VFP V.FC 28.8k \$139	VFX V.FC 24k \$119 PC; \$130 Mac VFX V.FC 28.8k \$159 PC; \$170 Mac
ZyXEL	U-1496B* 16.8K \$299 U-1496B+* 19.2K \$389	U-1496E* 16.8K \$299	N/A	U-1496E* v.32terbo 16.8K \$299

* Modems with an asterisk include 14,400 baud FAX send/receive at no extra charge!

Notes on Table I:

1. All internal modems are assumed to be PC-AT ISA bus unless otherwise noted. Some manufacturers do not offer internals; be careful when ordering.
2. Consult manufacturer for details on availability of Caller ID or voice-mail processing options (any modem above).
3. These prices NEVER include shipping and handling, which is always extra, Typically \$5 - \$15 U.S. dollars.
4. V.34 is International (ITU-T) standard for 28.8K. This is not the same as V.FAST (generic name) or V.FC (Rockwell based 28.8K standard).

port site. Hayes also maintains a presence on Usenet groups and Fido.

The IBEX-based HayesFax Response fax-on-demand system is primarily a sales/marketing tool via an 800 number. Technical support assistance via this option is limited and only covers general topics. Beefing this up would be a major addition to their solid support presence.

CONTACT POINTS

BBS: 404.840.9200
Voice: 404.446.6336 or 800-GO-HAYES
HayesFAX FOD: 800.429.3739
Internet email: rlacy@hayes.com

Practical Peripherals

PPI has a long-standing reputation of sound, low-cost modems. They offer a number of online support options, which is a good thing, for trying to get voice support from PPI is truly a challenge; and in my case it was an impossible challenge. Over a period of five business days, I dialed no less than 20 times per day, spanning 90 minutes, with no success. I even checked the 404 area code operator to ensure there were no network outages. No outages, just busy signals! [Editor's note: calls made at presstime, at off-peak hours, were received successfully.]

As an alternative, I was able to get into their PractiFax fax-on-demand system quite easily, even during expected rush hours. The system is easy to follow, but much like the Hayes FOD it offers primarily sales/marketing information and few technical documents. Fax responses were received typically in around 20-30 minutes of the request. The system gives you an expected real-time delay, but it seemed to consistently underestimate response times. Still, this is a nice added feature not found in other FOD's.

PPI also offers a forum on CompuServe for folks in need of more global support.

The six-node Wildcat! PPI BBS is a well thought out system. According to BBS stats, they've taken around 4,000 calls in four months, so busy signals should be few. There are ample file and message areas with support, as well as sales/marketing information. The technical bulletins are a bit light, but technical files seem to cover most of the

common problems. The message areas are tended well by support staff. Turn-around times seem to be within a couple of days.

CONTACT POINTS

BBS: 404.734.4600
Voice: 404.840.9966
PractiFAX FOD: 800.225.4774
CompuServe: GO PPIFORUM

Supra

Supra enters the race with the same frustrating busy signals on their voice support line as PPI. I subjected my demon dialer to much the same abuse as mentioned above with no success. Ah! I thought. They have a fax-back service.

"Thank you for calling the Supra fax-back service. This system will be out of service until April 26."

Well, let's try the BBS.

The eight-node TBBS Supra system was available when I called, even during crunch times between noon and 3 p.m. That's a good sign for BBS support.

The system takes around 550 calls per day, so expect occasional busy signals. It's got a good cross-section of message and file areas, and messages are answered promptly. I also like the fact that there is ordering and warranty entry online — nice touch folks! Supra has announced an Internet Web site, but alas, it's only a huge graphic that eventually tells you there's nothing online yet.

If the page comes along like the BBS, though, it should be a welcome stop on the Net.

CONTACT POINTS

BBS: 503.967.2444
Voice: 503.967.2490 (DOS)
Voice: 503.967.2491 (Windows)
FOD: 503-967-0072
Web: www.supra.com
FTP: ftp.supra.com

US Robotics

USR has a long history of great products and terrible phone support. Reputations like this are hard to shake. I called both the Sportster and Courier voice support lines since many sysops use both. Sportster support is a toll call, Courier toll-free. No busy signals were

ever encountered on either side, although the Sportster side of support does slow you down a bit with heavy interactive menus before getting to a live technician. It took me nearly three minutes just to get to a prompt where I could ask for a live tech! After that, hold times averaged just under 5 minutes, but with a worst case hold of 15:30! Ouch!

Courier support is much more simplistic with average hold times to first-level support averaging under 30 seconds. From there, second-level support averaged an additional 20 seconds. The technicians were typically in-the-know, but seemed a bit inexperienced with the newer technologies such as V.34 and Win-Ever... I mean Win95.

The USR PCBoard BBS offers 18 nodes. According to an old stats bulletin, it takes around 1,500 calls per day — yes, per day. I found it to be busy at peak times, but two or three minutes of redialing always got me in.

Message and file areas are abundant, with message response times averaging 48 hours or so. Customer service messages seem to take longer than technical support for some reason.

The file areas alone are enough to make folks call this system — not many support systems carry the array of files found here. All files on the system are

CONTINUES ...

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also available via anonymous ftp; USR offers a Web page and email support.

You can use their Internet-on-Demand system (much like their FOD) by emailing to support@usr.com. The subject line dictates whether an automated or live response occurs.

I received responses from this system typically overnight.

The IBEX-based FOD system contains sales, marketing and technical support documents, and responded with my fax typically in under five minutes.

USR is also on CompuServe, where they're finally getting back to respectable turn-around times of 24-48 hours. Look for them on the Usenet groups as well.

CONTACT POINTS

BBS: 708.982.5092

Voice: 800.550.7800 (Courier)

Voice: 708.982.5151 (Sportster)

FOD: 800.762.6163

Web: www.usr.com

FTP: ftp.usr.com

Internet email: support@usr.com

CompuServe: 76711,707 or GO USRO-BOTICS

Zoom Telephonics

Zoom Telephonics was yet another that drove my dialer to an early demise. After five days of failed attempts to reach voice support, I called the BBS. Their eight-line Wildcat! BBS serves the basic needs of its customers answering about 550 calls per day, according to the online stats bulletin. Message and file areas are simple and uncluttered. Basic support files are online, but could use some additions. Support messages are apparently behind, as many folks are complaining of responses taking as long as 10 days or more.

There also seems to be some staff rotation going on in Zoom support, and BBS messages are suffering greatly. I do like their approach of common problems being addressed right at login via information screens, and I'm sure this is something you'll see competitors adopting at some point.

You can also fax messages to Support or use their Voice Menu fax system. The catch with this system, though, is that it is not a fax back system. You must be calling with a fax machine or a modem with a phone attached and switch to fax

mode on the fly.

Zoom can also be reached via CompuServe where they tend to be more responsive than their BBS or live faxes.

CONTACT POINTS

BBS: 617.423.3733

Voice: 800.666.6191

Voice: 617.423.1072

Voice FAX: 617.423.4651

FAX: 617.423.9231

CompuServe: 71333,1527

Zyxel

Zyxel was a pleasant surprise to me. It was a bit tough to get a live person on their voice support, but I never hit a busy signal. I was often dropped into voice-mail instead of linking with a technician, so I just kept opting for the operator until a technician came on.

Their support staff was patient and polite as I weaved a tale of modem woe. Their resolutions were sound and worked with me to ensure the problem I described was resolved before I hung

CONTINUES ...

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(Info via modem)

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Bartender - Make drinks for computer controlled customers & manage your own bar	\$99
File Viewer - Let users scroll up down and keyword search any length textfile on your bbs.	\$79
Accounting Automation - Accept 900#, Credit Cards and other forms of payment.	\$39
Anonymous Teleconference - Nobody knows who said what in this teleconference.	\$49
Colorific - Let your users color coordinate messages, registries, pages, whispers and more.	\$25
Credit Exchange - Allow users to swap days for credits or credits for days, totally flexible.	\$39
Dual Password Security - Give users a second password for certain areas of your bbs.	\$39
Executive Informer - Send News, Bulk Email by key, class, sex, age & more.	\$49
Global Teleconference - Talk in 36 channels at the same time from anywhere.	\$49
Graffiti Wall - Our colorful Graffiti Wall is globally accessible for extra usage.	\$15
Modem-To-Modem - Play modem to modem games or transfer files directly to users	\$29
Not Keys - Negate the effects of keys in personal or class keyrings - give to users or classes	\$49
Major Pager - Let users make their beeper go off when receiving email, pages and more!	\$79
Ultra Globals - The most useful package of globals available, many unique features.	\$79
World Wide War - formerly World Conquest, strategy game of world domination.	\$139
Autopost - Leave a message for the next user, can hold configurable # of messages.	\$15
Cybertech - Futuristic role playing text adventure, over 400 rooms, player combat	\$79
Forbidden Lands I - The City of Falchon, over 300 rooms to explore, D&D Style Game	\$79
Forbidden Lands II - The Vale of Grimyre, over 500 rooms and over 120 monster types	\$79
Forbidden Lands III - The Islands of Dawn, over 600 rooms and configurable quests	\$79
EZ-Mailer - Send all new signups a flyer in the mail automatically!	\$79
Choke - Graphical word game: save the sysop from being choked! Expandable dictionary	\$99
Star Market - Build trading companies in space and then purchase stock to make profit.	\$129
Online Menu Tree Editor - Edit menuing system without taking system offline	\$89
Who Cares? - Control what gets posted to your audit trail.	\$29
User Information Editor - Replaces account display/edit. Sysop edit user info	\$64
Major Query - Keyword search your audit trail online, list users with a certain key & more	\$39

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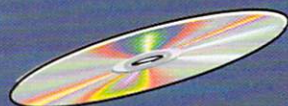
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TABLE II — VENDOR CONTACT INFORMATION

VENDOR NAME	CALL THEIR BBS AT THIS NUMBER AND...	...DOWNLOAD THIS FILE.	IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS CALL..	CONTACT VIA EMAIL
AT&T Paradyne	(813) 532-5254	ATTSYSOP.TXT	(800) 554-4996	t.bradshaw@paradyne.com
CPI/ViVa	(805) 499-9646; (215) 746-9948	CPIA.TXT	(800) 854-7600	
Hayes Corp.	(404) 446-6336; (800) USHAYES	H96SYSOP.TXT	(404) 840-9200	rlacy@hayes.com
Intel	(503) 645-6275	OFFER.TXT	(503) 228-9707	
Microcom	(800) 822-8224	SYSOP.TXT	(617) 762-5134	
MultiTech	(612) 785-9875; (800) 392-2432	PRICE.TXT	(612) 785-3500	
Pract. Per.	(404) 734-4600	SYSBBS.TXT	(404) 840-9966	GO PPIFORUM (CompuServe)
Supra Corp.	(503) 967-2444	SYSOP.TXT	(503) 967-2400	orders@supra.com
USRobotics	(708) 982-5092	SYSDEAL.TXT	(708) 982-5151 (800) 550-7800	support@usr.com CIS 76711,707
Ven-Tel	(408) 922-0988	SYSDEAL.TXT	(408) 436-7400	
Zoom Teleph.	(617) 423-3733	ZOOMBBS.ZIP	(617) 423-1076	CIS 71333,1527
ZyXEL	(714) 693-0762	ZYXEL.TXT	(714) 693-0804	sales@zyxel.com

up the phone.

Including transfer times and mis-routed voice-mail drops, hold times averaged slightly less than two minutes. Best case was 15 seconds.

Their five-line Synchronet BBS contains basic information, but lacks the abundance of files and support of most others. It contains sales/marketing information, as does their Web page.

Their message base is very slow with 200 messages spanning six months or more. Response times on the BBS as well as their presence on Usenet and Fido are consistently prompt. The ZyXel Web page is a bit too graphically intensive for many dial-in users, but if you're looking for technical specs and images of their products you'll find it on their Web site.

You can also browse their anonymous ftp site for a number of support

and sales/marketing files.

Also, visit ZyXel on CompuServe in the ModemVendor forum.

CONTACT POINTS

BBS: 714.693.0762
 Voice: 714.693.0804
 Web: www.zyxel.com
 FTP: ftp.zyxel.com
 Internet email: sales@zyxel.com



Use this information carefully when balancing product value. As you can see, support varies in quality and availability. Don't get caught thinking "Ah! I'll never need support."

Yes you may, and it could make or break your venture, or spoil your hobby. Gauge support as you would product reliability and features.

Next month I'll take a look at the

need for speed. We'll find out who's breaking the laws of modem speed limits and how it works... or doesn't.

Sysop/Provider programs

I've included a couple of basic charts to help those who believe a picture (well, chart) is worth a page or two of rambling text.

The minimum performance level is v.32bis (14,400 bps), but will soon be displaced by V.34. All modems also must have v.42bis for error correction and data compression to make this list. The rightmost column of Table I shows all modems faster than 14400 bps that support at least v.32bis standards.

I recommend only V.34 for sysops. End-users can economically afford to now live by the same standards. The

CONTINUES ...

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Internet: Telnet lifestyle.com (166.82.150.22)

The Male Forum:

Where men meet men every day. Absolutely the world's most erotic GAY CHAT system.
Modem: 516-689-0286 (local access from 1000+ cities)
Internet: Telnet mforum.com (166.82.150.41)

Grafix:

XXX-rated computer pictures hot enough to melt your modem. Every file is worth downloading.
Modem: 516-689-2853 (local access from 1000+ cities)
Internet: Telnet grafix.com (166.82.150.31)

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Oltima 2000	\$ 249.00	Global Actions	\$ 39.95	Major Pro	\$ 199.00
Jumble Madness	\$ 89.95	Match Maker	\$ 159.00	VisaMan	\$ 149.00
Horse Track RIP	\$ 129.95	Online Employment	\$ 109.00	Global Power	\$ 49.00
BBSopoly RIP	\$ 139.95	Happy Birthday	\$ 49.00	High Velocity Utilities	\$ 100.00
Mouse Trap (Maze)	\$ 39.95	Major Agenda	\$ 149.00	Major Goose	\$ 100.00
Liar Card Game	\$ 39.95	Omni-Mail	\$ 299.00	Auto Validator	\$ 60.00
Hearts Card Game	\$ 39.95	BBS Lister w/ MajorNet	\$ 69.00	Form Editor	\$ 75.00
Pig Dice Game	\$ 39.95	ADP Phone Lister	\$ 99.00	Menu Magician	\$ 100.00
NovaTrek	\$ 99.00	City Search	\$ 39.00	Metakeys	\$ 50.00
Crossroads	\$ 250.00	Major Stats	\$ 75.00	GalactiBoard (8 port extn'l)	\$ 449.95
Global Destruction	\$ 125.00	AutoRate	\$ 99.00	GalactiBox (16 port intr'l)	\$ 1289.00
Game Connection	\$ 239.00	HelpMan	\$ 49.00	PC XNet Card (X.25)	\$ 1039.95
Trade Wars 2002	\$ 400.00	The Newsroom	\$ 80.00	Galacticomm's Intelligent Serial Kit	
Backgammon RIP	\$ 99.95	WorldLink Cross-Wordz	\$ 49.95	ISK 115K - 16 line	\$2250.00
Chess RIP	\$ 99.95	WorldLink Jumble Madness	\$ 29.95	ISK 115K - 32 line	\$3175.00
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Checkers RIP	\$ 99.95	Major CD	\$ 129.00	ISK 115K - 96 line	\$6425.00
Tic-Tac-Toe	\$ 19.95	Major CD Lan	\$ 89.00	ISK 115K - 128 line	\$8075.00
Board Package (5 above)	\$ 299.95	Major CD & Major CD Lan	\$ 199.00	ISK 230K - 16 line	\$2195.00
Cross-Wordz RIP	\$ 150.00	CD Express	\$ 49.95	ISK 230K - 32 line	\$3250.00
Yahtzee	\$ 19.95	900 Service	FREE	ZyXEL Internal 16.8	\$ 259.00
MicroMind	\$ 39.95	Chat-on-Demand	\$ 89.95	ZyXEL External 16.8	\$ 259.00
Instant Lotto	\$ 29.95	Remote Console	\$ 90.00	Linux Slackware V.2.1	\$ 49.95
Video Poker	\$ 59.95	AMS DOS Shell	\$ 89.00	Dr. Linux Book	\$ 39.95
Video Blackjack	\$ 69.95	Line Monitor	\$ 49.00	Vue-it	\$ 99.00
Mega Madness	\$ 49.00	EZ Fax	\$ 59.00	FT-Fax Protocol	\$ 149.00
Card Sharks	\$ 69.95	The File Library Extension	\$ 149.00	Motorola Routers	CALL
Pulse	\$ 69.00	Mountain Mail	\$ 149.00	CSU/DSU's	CALL
Log Master	\$ 39.95	Real Time Cleanup	\$ 149.00	Terminal Servers	CALL

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 Telnet: HS.WISENET.COM IP: 198.69.101.2



Rusty

Eddie

Dual Eliminator

Rusty n Eddie's BBS announces the introduction of their **Dual Eliminator**. Simply plug your phone line to the Dual Eliminator and then plug the Dual Eliminator into your modem. This device consists of 2 passive electronic filters that handle both high and low frequency noise from the phone line. Both high and low frequency are independently adjustable with knobs that mount on the front of the unit. Surge protection is provided by an electronic varistor.



A light emitting diode, also mounted on the front of the unit, glows whenever the device is eliminating noise from the phone lines. This device can solve the majority of noise problems associated with telecommunications today, and is sold with a 30-day, money-back guarantee. They sell for \$25 each plus \$4 shipping and handling. To order, call Rusty n Eddie's at 216-726-4217, fax to 216-726-3595 or call their BBS number 216-726-2620; they will accept Visa, MasterCard and American Express.

Rusty n Eddie's BBS
7393 California Ave.
Youngstown, OH 44512

V.34 ITU-T standard offers 50 percent more throughput than v.32bis, at only minimal cost increases. It also offers a better chance at a high-speed connect (24,000–28,800) than VFC under minimal line conditions. Beware of upgrade plans to v.FAST/v.34 modems; various manufacturer programs vary greatly.

More than a modem

Some vendors offer more than just modems to the sysops joining their program. For example, US Robotics offers substantial discounts off their CommServer 486 LAN product. Other vendors, such as ZyXel, offer big discounts on modem rackmounts. A rack-mount reduces the tangle of multiplying power supplies and becomes economical for sysops planning on larger, multi-line systems.

Buyers' restrictions

If you maintain a system operating 24-hours per day for the last six months, then you're eligible for any of these discounts. Some manufacturers only require that you are currently running a BBS at time of ordering. A few may actually waive the current operating requirement.

Once you receive your modem, you're expected to keep the BBS up and running between six and 12 months

(requirements vary). Generally, the modem is yours to do whatever you want with after this period expires. Some manufacturers may ask you to never sell modems purchased on a discount plan. Modem resellers, such as computer stores, are generally excluded from participation in discount plans.

Nearly all of the modem vendors are accepting VISA and MasterCard for orders. Some also accept a cashier's check or money-order for prepay orders. Personal checks often require additional clearing time which just holds up your order. C.O.D. is becoming less common, and is rumored for phase-out by several of the larger players over the next few months.

One requirement, which goes for nearly all vendors, is that they generally expect at least a one-line advertisement somewhere in your welcoming screens. For example: "Using the finest Model XYZ modem from Acme Modem Co." would be perfectly acceptable in all cases.

Order processing and availability

Delivery times and schedules vary radically, so your mileage may vary. Many manufacturers are placing orders on hold until they release V.34. Hayes typically shipped in 48 hours, and to the far extreme, US Robotics guarantees a two to six week waiting period.

For Canadian, European and other sysops outside the U.S., you may or may not be eligible for discount offers. Please check carefully ahead of time to avoid disappointment. You may want to check with their European subsidiaries before contacting the U.S. office. ■■■■■

The Modem Mage can be reached at ModemMag@ais.net

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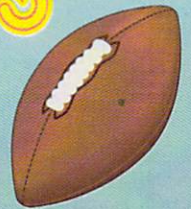
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These Sysops are finding many new users who want to obtain information as soon as it happens. People that need time sensitive data will come to you, since you'll be hours ahead of newspapers, and other media. Whether at work, school, or at play your users needs only a modem and computer to quickly locate the exact data they want.

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Info@NS1. Planetc.Com
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If you're a sysop and would like to be considered for the list, contact one of the following sites:

BOBsBBS — 916.929.7511

Livewire/CD SUB — Download CDSUB.ZIP from The Livewire BBS (*BBS Magazine's* support board) at 609.235.5297 and register the CD SUB Door program for a permanent listing.

FTP — Download US PUB103.ZIP from oak.oakland.edu, create USBBS.DAT and send the completed file to BOBsBBS or update@bobsbbs.uucp.netcom.com.

Call 609.953.9110 (voice) for help.

Derived from the USBBSLIST.

LEGEND

BBS TYPE	BAUD	MODULATION	SIZE	NODES	SUBSCRIPTION	INTERNET FEAT.
B	29	D	50+	3	\$	3

BBS TYPE
A = Auntie
B = PCBoard
C = Phoenix/Collie/Collosus
D = dBBS
F = Spitfire
G = GAP
H = PC-Host
I = TriBBS
J = SuperBBS
L = Telegard
M = OraComm/Major/Galacticomm
N = Genesis Deluxe
O = Opus/Maximus
P = GT PowerComm
Q = QuickBBS/RemoteAccess
R = RBBS
S = Searchlight
T = TBBS or TCOMM
U = UltraBBS
V = WWIV
W = Wildcat
X = BBS-PC, RyBBS, ROS, Fido, Citadel, Osiris, etc. or custom, unverified or unknown type
Y = T.A.G.
Z = TPBoard

BAUD
0 = 300
1 = 1200
2 = 2400
9 = 9600 or faster

MODULATION TYPE
V = V.32 or V.32bis
U = USRobotics HST
F = Hayes VSM
F = V.Fast, V.34 (1/25/95)
O = Other proprietary method
D = USRobotics Dual Standard (V32 and HST)
B = Hayes Ultra (V32 and VSM)

SIZE
Indicated in 100s of megs.
+ = CD-ROM.

NODES
Number of lines

SUBSCRIPTION
\$ = subscription; blank = FREE

INTERNET FEATURES	
SERVICES	CODE
Mail	X X X X X X X X
Usenet	XX XX XX XX
FTP	XX XX XX XX
Telnet	XX XX XX XX

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
Must support 2400 bps or greater
100 MB of disk capacity
24hr/7 day service
Sysop must give REAL NAME

201-585-0957 NJ Fort Lee
Phantom Mark Bellow
Fidonet 1:2604/411, Freedom Net.
Uncensored, open discussion. Good
Files (H/P/A/V) and TradeWars.
Intelligence a must.
B 29 FV 2 1

201-633-9346 NJ Paterson
First Class Timothy Chin
Fidonet — Over 150 Conferences,
CD-ROM online with over 11,000
files. Wildnet HUB. Free BBS.
W 29 FV 14+ 2

201-635-5726 NJ Chatham
The Machine Rob Knierim
Games and Chat. ChatLink,
Multiplayer games (Doom),
Technical support info, Majornet and
other echos.
M 19 V 50+ 8 \$ 2

201-659-8032 NJ Hoboken
Vital COM BBS Jose Negron, Jr
Electronics, computer programming,
games.
F 29 VF 1 1

201-729-2602
Chuck's Attempt Chuck Ammann

201-731-6416 NJ West Orange
Get A Life. Marc Gaylen
All adult BBS specializing in adult
graphics and games. Thousands
of files for all lifestyles.
F 29 VF 60+ 3

201-904-9781 NJ Prospect Pk
Deredain's Realm Ron Lotterman
EMS related, Games, Wildcat!
utilities. Support BBS for NJ Assoc.
of Paramedics & EMTs, Fidonet.
W 09 D 10 2

201-941-7778 NJ Ridgfield
rockpile.com Tom Heffernan
Multi-user chat and games, Gopher,
Archie, IRC, FTP, Telnet, Rlogin,
Finger, SLIP, Fidonet, MajorNet,
Internet. NetAccess forums and chat.
M 19 DF 5+ 12 \$ F

202-234-0750 WashingtonDC
Absolute Bliss P. Willow
Games, files, adult discussions,
cyber politics.
M 29 V 15+ 20 \$ 8

203-228-9814 CT Hebron
CyberiaSystems Nathan McMullen
IBM compatibles, utilities, games,
Fido echos, Ravenet, DPUnt, and
COMMNet.
X 29 VO 4 1

203-250-0938 CT Cheshire
OPAL Network John McCaffrey
Scientific, education, games.
X 09 D 18 2

203-397-5225 CT Hamden
CONNECT BBS Rico Gattilia
Utilities (Win/DOS), games, graph-
ics. Over 12 CD ROMs of shareware;
registered online door games.
W 09 D 47+ 1

204-475-5199 MB Winnipeg
Generic BBS Victor Laking
General family board dedicated to
friendly socializing with useful and

interesting text files, BBS Lists, list
on known nets, fan-fiction.
I 09 V 1 1

205-478-8599 NY Glens Falls
The Thing Dave Jaswaye
Games.
W 09 V 4 1

205-665-7924 AL Montevallo
Pirate's Cove James Acker
General purpose board with online
games, sports, genealogy, files, chat.
X 19 D 7+ 1 3

205-751-9890 AL Hartselle
Paragon OnLine Richard Creel
Community oriented: entire family
welcome. Graphical BBS with free
Windows front end. Forums include
sports, movies, sci-fi. Official
Apogee distribution site.
X 09 V 9+ 1

205-759-4817 AL Tuscaloosa
FloydACDogHse. Lyle Osborne
Files and online gaming. Many
games to play. E-Mag magazine rack
via READROOM. Full-featured data-
base for online viewing and retrieval
of text.
W 09 VO 14+ 1

205-859-4696 AL Huntsville
Independent NWS Randy Hearn
Political discussion — conservative/
Christian. Full Internet access 24
hours a day.
M 09 V 2 1 F

206-353-3013 WA Everett
Snohomish Sys Mark Henderson
System support and utilities for the
DOS user. Excellent file libraries with
no ratios. Catering to the mature and
sophisticated DOS/Windows user.
B 29 D 14+ 2

206-584-4309
The Wolf's Den Keith Shinkle

206-747-6397 WA Bellevue
SEANews Bill McCormick
Provided as a public service. It pro-
vides free access to Usenet, email,
and other Internet services.
X 09 FO 34+ 3 B

207-764-0788 ME Mapleton
Vacation Land Darcy Lovley
Six CDs online; 120 online games.
B 09 V 10+ 1 1

207-777-5085 ME Auburn
High Five Jim Hart
Community network.
X 19 V 250 1 3

207-945-2612 ME Bangor
Check Six. BBS Paul Bussiere
General interest, online games, USA
Today News. Live satellite feed,
Internet mail, over 1,000,000 files.
W 19 VF 14+ 4 \$ 3

208-664-2983
The Third Mill Jim Fromm

209-224-9310 CA Fresno
Revolution BBS Brian Watters
Full-featured 44-node system with
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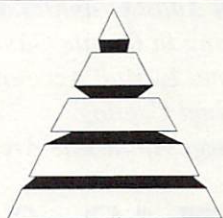
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Q&A Q&A Q&A Q&A Q&A Q&A

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Twenty years later I was sysoping. Lucky I'd had to learn to type in junior high school, for I discovered that running a BBS required most every skill I possessed and then some — I could bring typing, organizing, ease in talking to folks calling from all over the world, and dogged stick-to-itiveness to the task.

Brian, my husband and the first of us to become smitten with the fun and excitement of getting around by modem, brought his love of language, sense of humor, enjoyment of people, as well as an uncanny ability to make hardware work and stay happy!

And eight years and 4,500,000 calls later we occasionally catch a glimpse of just how much trailblazing has been going on during these years.

Brian and I have been with this thing since late 1986. We have set up three online platforms. The first, a multi-node bulletin board that worked on slave cards, which we walked away from by 1989; the second, a hardware intensive PC-based multi-node system running on a LAN, which thrives to this day; and most recently, the third, is a true Unix free BSD-based Internet provider service.

During this time the number of folks online has grown perhaps 20 fold. We've seen standard modem speeds jump from 2400 to 28,800 baud, BBSs grow in number from hundreds to

many thousands and the average modem user's computer power has grown astronomically. Ongoing transformation has certainly become the name of the game!

Eight years is a very long time in this business. And simply by being involved day in and day out, Brian and I have become about as experienced a pair of sysops as you can find.

From setting up modems to setting up screens; from hard times to making money; and, from brushes with the law to prestigious awards for pioneering in the field — we've been there. And we would like to invite *BBS Magazine* readers who are considering becoming sysops or who are sysoping, or just curious modemers, to send us your questions.

It's part of a sysop's lot not to consider any concerns too trivial or too grand.

Problem callers? Insurance? Advertising?

Want to share your discovery? We will respond to as many queries each month as space allows and look forward to sharing with you what sysoping is really like.

So look for us in the months to come.

Please address your questions, comments, problems or concerns to:

BBS: Comment to Sysop, 617.349.1300, V.34.

Internet email: tess.heder@channel1.com

Fax: 617.354.3100, Attention: Ask TESS

US Mail: Channel 1, Attn: Ask TESS, 1030 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138

Tess Heder is co-founder of Channel 1 (R) BBS, winner of the Dvorak/Zoom Award of Excellence in Telecommunications and the 1992 Best General Interest BBS.



BBS: Getting back to WIP, it seems this is the core technology making the BBS possible. How does it work?

AD: WIP is a dynamic protocol which looks and feels like true Windows... that is because it IS true Windows. To the end user, they see

Windows menus which are controlled and created by the sysop. These custom menus launch client/server applications. The combination of WIP (dynamic customizable menus) and the client/server architecture of MindWire make for an extremely powerful "toolkit" for the end-user.

BBS: Will MindWire necessitate a programming background for sysops?

AD: None, just draw menus, link them to other menus or to an application and that is it. However, if you are a programmer, there is no better development architecture than MindWire. Sysops can develop clients in just days that leverage existing server functionality and all of the power of our basic client, or add their own server "services" to the MindWire Service, thus making MindWire complete "Middleware."

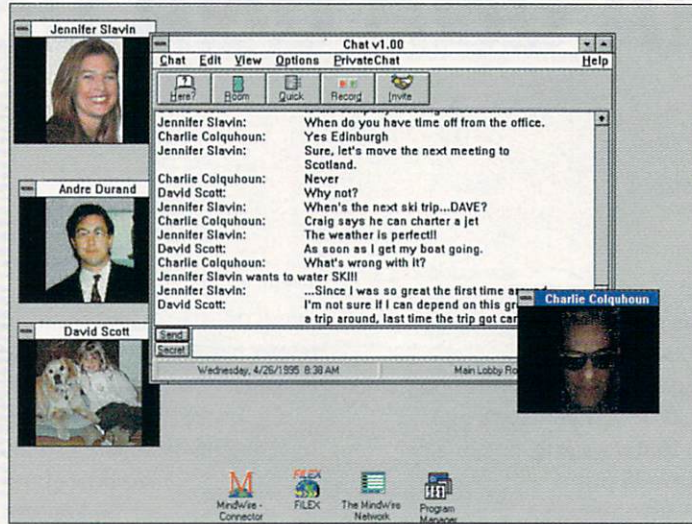
BBS: Who are you targeting with MindWire?

AD: Companies and individuals wishing to provide distinct and robust

online services... with a solid development path for the future.

BBS: What are three of the "cooler things" MindWire callers can expect to see after logging on?

AD: Chat with photographs, screen video presentations with the single click



of an icon from our WIP menus, live news and travel packages, graphics that rival if not surpass AOL, CD ROMs within the File Library, real estate listings, and products and ordering online... And don't forget sound everywhere.

BBS: What's in the works for future upgrades?

AD: Well, we have several different database solutions and some really robust applications in several cate-

gories; the rest you will just have to wait and see.

Let me also mention our product FILEX is "built in" to MindWire and provides the modem connectivity layer for MindWire. FILEX can auto-sense incoming terminal, FILEX, MindWire and fax calls.

BBS: What's the pricing for MindWire?

AD: \$495 for eight users (any combination of modem, network, Internet). Client software is FREE, as is a single line server, as part of Project WILDFIRE. Developers Guide is Free, too.

BBS: What are some of the "add-on" features available to MindWire sysops?

AD: QuickBase, the fastest way to get Microsoft Access Online with photographs and Sound.

RealCLASS MLS, a complete real estate multiple listing service application for MindWire,

DC Interface Builder, which allows one to create WIP menus for their MindWire Service.

DC Compress, which allows one to compress any image for use within any MindWire application.

For more information on MindWire, contact DCN at 805.961.8700. Or call the demo board at 805.961.8702.

New 'IQ' for Visually Impaired

NuIQ Software has released Powerboard Speech 1.10, the next generation of its BBS software for the blind, visually impaired and dyslexic.

PBS, first released in August of last year, is a modified version of the company's popular Powerboard BBS software, with alterations that make it work with speech synthesizers so sysops run a board sans monitor.

The new version contains many improvements over its predecessor, including the virtual elimination of the

need for sysops to force the synthesizer to "review" text transmitted to the user. Instead, with 1.10 all important information such as command prompts are now output to the synthesizer.

Also in the upgrade is a file tagging system that uses numbers (easier for sight impaired); a speech-friendly online editor has been added to the remote sysop interface as has a new function for managing file download areas.




"These new features allow the disabled sysop complete flexibility, as those familiar with Powerboard might expect, coupled with unmatched ease of use," said John Altmeyer, a visually impaired sociologist who serves as a co-

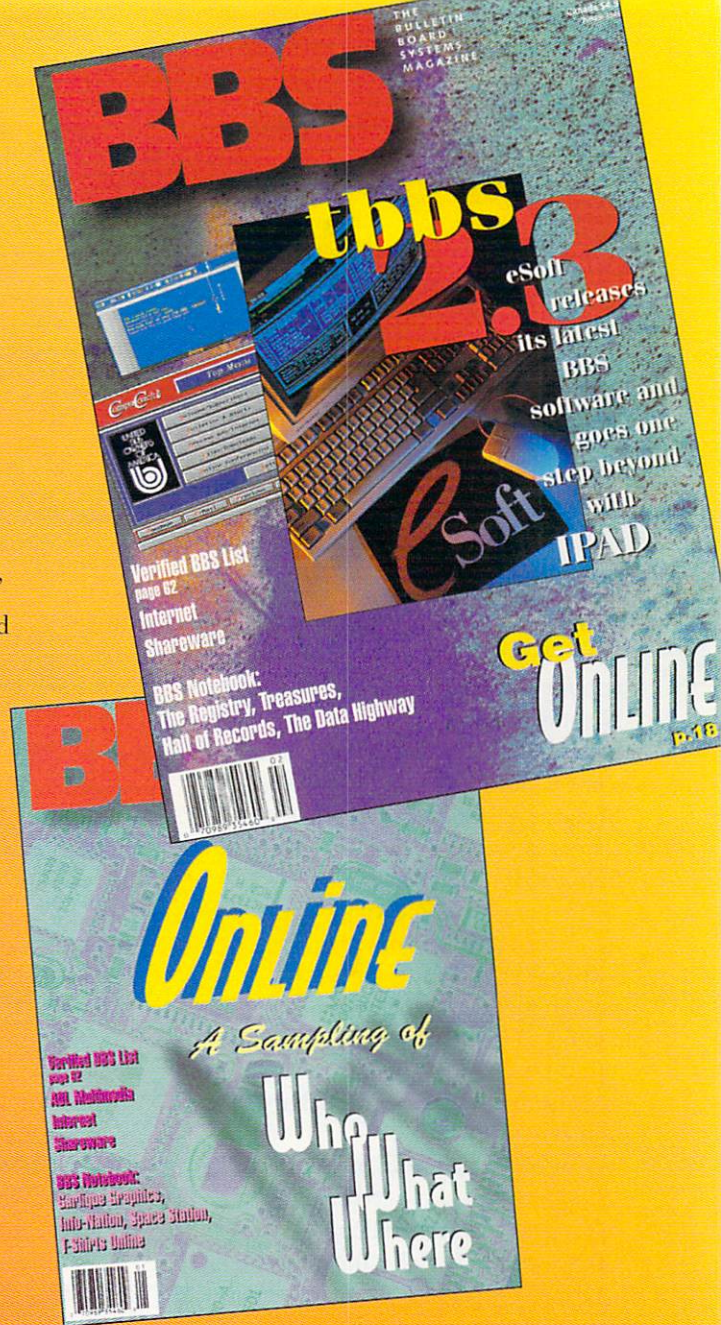
director of the PBS project.

Both Powerboard and Powerboard Speech are available for \$99 (four-line) from NuIQ Software at 1.800.THINK-COM (voice). A free test-drive of the system is available from NuIQ's BBS at 914.834.7830, or the Powerboard Speech support BBS at 317.784.2422.



BBS Magazine

BBS Magazine is not only your ticket to the evolving information highway, it's also your road map.  With features on the latest in bulletin board software, interviews with top industry insiders and news and reviews of everything making its way into cyberspace, *BBS Magazine* has become required offline reading for anyone getting online.  Each month we look at the best and brightest BBSs, as well as those just getting started, and review the most informative books on BBSing and online services. Every issue features our expert columnists commenting on all aspects of life online. From the best deals on modems to our look into the Internet—it's all there. *BBS Magazine* is written for you, the BBS caller. The stories are exciting, informative and often entertaining.  We won't waste your time, but we *will* get you connected.



Subscriptions: 1 year US — \$30. Canada — \$50. 2 years US — \$50. Canada — \$90.

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Internet Power Tools

\$40,
375 pages, disk
by John Ross

For many, the real power of *Internet Power Tools* (Random House) doesn't exactly lie on the pages between its covers. Rather, it's compressed neatly onto a black, 3.5-inch floppy disk at the back of the book.

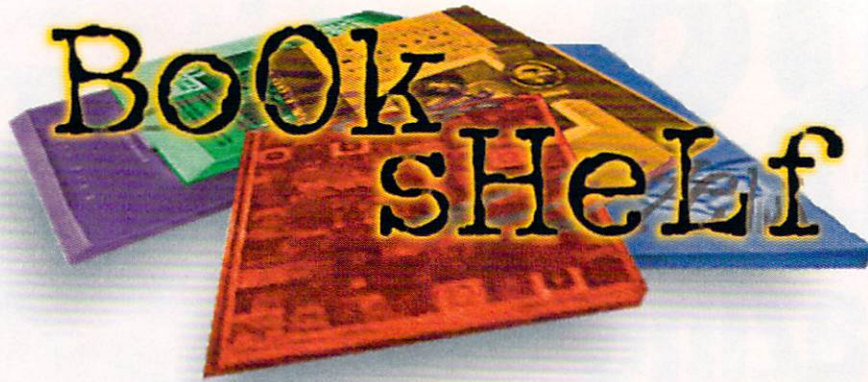
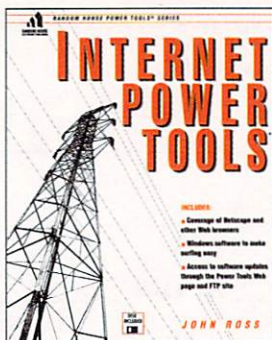
Author John Ross does a critical and commendable job of explaining the Net, the treasures it holds, and the tools needed to mine them. And he goes into some detail about how, why and where to connect. But it's the Internet shareware/software tools he includes on the floppy that really make the sell.

This is a book for people who've never seen a Unix prompt and don't care to ever encounter one. And though there's coverage of DOS applications, this is primarily a solution for Windows users, where if the mouse can't get it done, it's not worth the bother.

The new generation of graphical Windows tools packaged here include many available from FTP sites and BBSs around the globe, including an FTP and gopher client, a news reader, Trumpet Winsock for making the connection, two telnet clients, the clean Eudora mail client and the Cello Web browser.

But Ross also looks into other competing software for navigating the Net and offers, in detail, helpful hints on getting them loaded and running.

"Internet users don't have to limit themselves to a single set of navigation tools," Ross says. "There is currently a



broad range of both free and commercial programs available for using the Net, and my goal with *Internet Power Tools* is to help the readers decide which of these applications they should use to make the Internet more accessible."

And Ross doesn't gloss over shortfalls; if something's missing in a program, you'll know about it before encountering it live.

Other areas of focus include Internet service providers, three chapters about the Web and one on Internet searching tools.

And for when you're up and running, an *Internet Power Tools* Web site awaits at address www.randomhouse.com.

Net Trek

\$19, 387 pages

Some would argue that Star Trek has been a key impulse driving the development of the Internet, and the reason thousands have approached BBSing/Netting in the first place. True or not, the impact Star Trek has had on cyberspace is impossible to ignore.

Disagree? Look at the numbers: Over 4,000 sites and BBSs are devoted to or honor that short-lived, low-budget, '60s-era philo-galactic adventure drama and its children.

Trouble is, the boards, newsgroups, Web pages, and mailing lists have reached these numbers without anyone compiling a truly comprehensive locator map, resulting in a sort of oxymoron: Trekkers lost in space.

Now, in their usual thorough and entertaining style, the people at Michael Wolff & Co. and Random House Electronic Publishing (*Net Games*, *Net Chat*, etc.) have released *Net Trek*, "unofficial, unauthorized, and unleashed."

Says Michael Wolff, creator of the Net Books series, "Star Trek is to the Net what Milton Berle was to television — the juggernaut that powers the medium in its early days."

Flipping through *Net Trek's* pages, it's hard to disagree with Wolff, what with so many people doing so many different things in the name of Spock and Kirk.

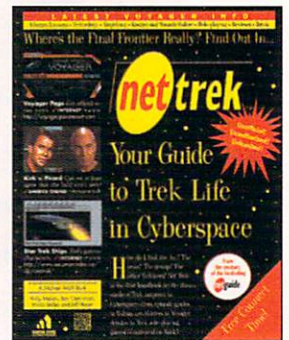
There are places to talk about the latest episode of Deep Space Nine, sites to download pictures and sounds, debate plots, role play, locate the next Trek convention, and suggest story ideas to the TV writers.

Tired of goober Wesley Crusher? Share your ideas on the best way to rid him from the show: *Net Trek* suggests newsgroup alt.ensign.wesley.die.die.die. Suppose you had a desire to read great works of Western literature in Klingonaase; you'll find it here.

And peppered throughout are bios on "Cybertrekkers," some of the most devoted ST fans.

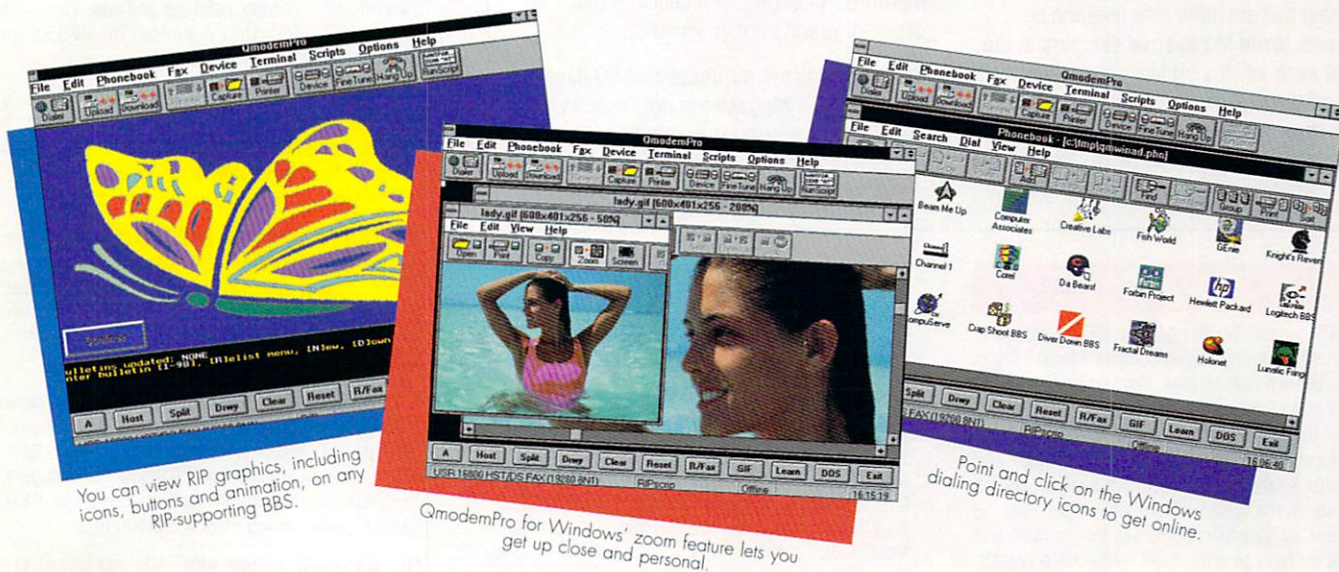
Net Trek also takes a look into related topics in chapters on "Real Space" (astronomy, NASA) and "Genre: Other Sci-Fi" (*Aliens*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Dune*, *Red Dwarf*, *Star Wars*, and *The X-Files*).

Serious fans will not want to boot/beam up without a copy nearby.



WARNING!

**This Product Contains Material
Of An Extremely Graphic Nature.**



You can view RIP graphics, including icons, buttons and animation, on any RIP-supporting BBS.

QmodemPro for Windows' zoom feature lets you get up close and personal.

Point and click on the Windows dialing directory icons to get online.

QmodemPro for Windows delivers more advanced graphic features than any other communications software.



When it comes to graphics, nobody does it better than Mustang Software.

Our award-winning QmodemPro for Windows communications software has all the cool graphics features you've been looking for. It's "RIP" ready,

so you can plug into the thousands of BBS systems offering graphics and full mouse support online.

QmodemPro for Windows was the first commercially available product in the industry to support RIPscript. QmodemPro for Windows also has a builtin GIF viewer that lets you view GIF graphics files as you download them. You can even ZOOM in for details. And QmodemPro has Windows icons for dialing directories, a true Windows phonebook. All you have to do to get online is double click on an icon.

No other communications software delivers graphic features like QmodemPro for Windows.

Recommended by Sysops everywhere.

But graphics aren't the only reason Sysops around the world recommend QmodemPro for Windows. They like it because it's powerful and easy to use, and can launch both data and fax calls. What they like most, though, is the fact that QmodemPro for Windows is packed with performance features that have been specifically requested by BBS callers.

At Mustang Software, we listen to our customers. And build their valuable comments into our products. All the outstanding features in QmodemPro for Windows today came from callers just like you.

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bottom of each ad sheet.

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Fill out the form on the next page and **FX** your ad to 609-953-7961 or **MAIL** it to BBS AD, Callers Digest, Inc., 701 Stokes Rd., Medford, NJ 08055 with check, money order, or credit card information.

Classified ads are purchased 60-90 days in advance. BBS Magazine is not responsible for incorrect telephone numbers/addresses, nor is it responsible for any claims made by classified advertisers.

BBS ADS

AAG BBS, almost anything goes BBS: Located in Jackson, MI, running Galacticom's Major BBS, is an 8-line system with 15 gigs. Yes that's right 15,000 Megs of files. Supporting 8 Gigs of Adult files, and 7 Gigs of IBM, Unix and Amiga files. Over 700 online adult stories, Online Chats, Games, Forums, and Daily Lotto. There is absolutely no file ratios, and no time limits on the system. The price is right, only .08 cents/hour, or \$30/year. Come see for yourself, and enjoy all we have to offer. 1-517-789-9826 (2400), 1-517-789-8608 (9600).

ACE STATION BBS, 818.891.0397, Using MajorBBS 6.25 w/16 lines expanding to over 64 lines on MS DOS. 15000 MB storage. 500 CD-Rom's online. All nodes 28,800 bps. Internet, Usenet, Matchmaker, Interactive Online games. ASP approved BBS. Largest library in the Nation. That's right 350,000mb of files.

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THE ANARCHIST'S BBS 214.289.8328, is a resource for anarchists, survivalists, adventurers, investigators, researchers, computer hackers and phone phreaks. Categories include: Bombs, Computer hacking, Drugs, Fake ID, Firearms, Fraud and con games, Investigation techniques, Locksmithing, Phone phreaking, Political, Surveillance and Survival.

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CHANNEL 1 ONLINE, 617-354-3230 — Using PCBoard. "The Best Files in the USA", 90 lines, v.32bis support. 96 IBM file libraries; Amiga; Macintosh; Unix; Adult. Massive Windows, GIF's, sound files collections. Online games and shopping. Echo Nets. InterNet. Over 4,000,000 calls and growing. Come Join us!

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CYBER COMM NETWORKS, 708.697.9572 Elgin, IL Sysop: Armor Robinson using C-Net 2.63, Supra 14.4 with 25gB. Fee \$4.60/month. Featuring easy to use message forums, kids & women only sections, singles meeting, hobby and adult areas, online chat, matchmaking, games, catalogs and ads. 255k files serving IBM, MAC, Unix & Amiga. The BBS where you make a difference.

DIGITAL ENCOUNTERS 615.922.5895, Adults only BBS. Offering Matchmaker, Adult files, Adult forums, Adult Chat, Star Trek and X-Files. Forums and the latest shareware. First 30 days are FREE. 900 service available for instant access.

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KBBS LOS ANGELES 818.886.0872 Telnet 204.96.25.7, 1000's single adults, weekly parties, shareware, GIFs, Games, and DOOM wads, 24/hr Worldlink chat. Online games, TradeWars 2002, Erotica, Trivia, DOOM game Connection. Internet: Telnet, Rlogin, IRC, FTP, WWW, Gopher, MUDs etc. Free Trial.

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CLASSIFIED ORDER FORM

Classified Dept., Callers Digest, Inc., 701 Stokes Rd, Medford, NJ 08055

The rate is \$25 per ad up to 300 characters long. Save money and send \$250 for a full year of advertising. The BBS name or first two words are set in bold capitals. All other type is plain. If you wish to have a heading category not listed, simply write in this new category and we will create it for your ad.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT.

Run this ad under the heading of _____

(For additional words, use separate sheet of paper)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (home) _____ (bus.) _____

Run class ad for _____ issues. Payment of \$ _____ enclosed.

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD, YOU MAY FAX THIS FORM TO (609) 953-7961.

M/C VISA (circle one) # _____ exp. date _____

Signature _____

ONE EYED JACK'S, 810.399.2845, 20,000 HOT sexy adult GIFs online! Thousands of adult text files, Wild X-Rated movies, and Sizzling fantasies. We are set up with the first time user in mind, with an easy to use interface. No hourly fees, only .55 cents per file downloaded. Visa/MC/Disc accepted online.

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CONTINUES...

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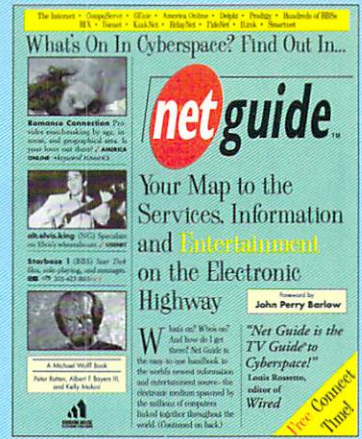
The Bestselling Guides to Cyberspace

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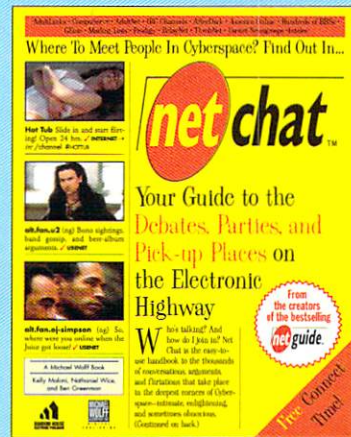
It's 1954 and your family has just bought a television set! Along with millions of others up and down Maple Street you want to know one thing: *what's on?* Now that same question echoes out in Cyberspace. As the Net becomes an entertainment as well as an information medium, a program guide becomes an essential tool and a must-have part of the experience.

That guide is the bestselling book *Net Guide*—"The TV Guide to Cyberspace!" according to *Wired* Editor Louis Rossetto. "The book people keep stealing off my desk," says *Time's* Joshua Quittner.

We're mapping a new world.

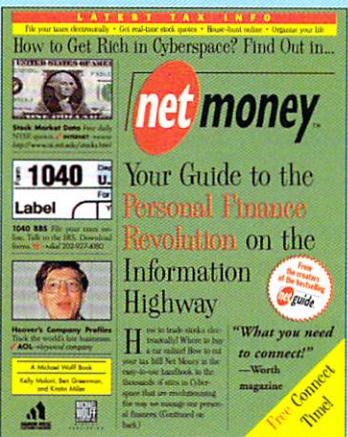
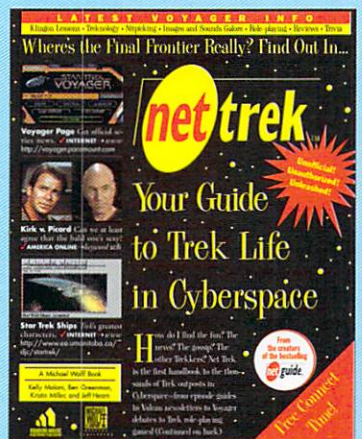
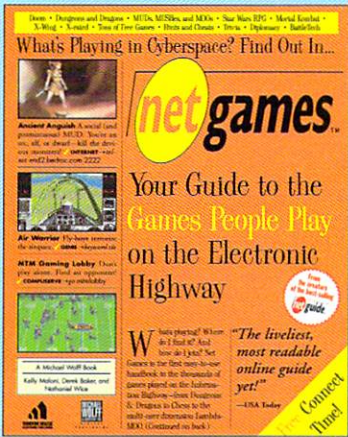


But that's not all! As Cyberspace grows exponentially, whole new obsessions and passions are born. Thousands of games are suddenly available online and so now there's *Net Games*—your "map to the playing fields of Netdom," says *Newsweek*—and with millions of conversations to join in Cyberspace, you'll need *Net Chat*, "The best surfer's guide out there," writes *Entertainment Weekly*. Every other month, there's a new Cyber-baedeker attracting



what the *Wall Street Journal* calls "a wide and devoted readership." This month there's *Net Money*, here to tell you how the online world can make your life easier and richer! And if you really want to visit the final, final frontier, you'll need *Net Trek*—truly the ultimate guide! And watch for *Net Sports*, *Net Tech*, and *Net Music*, all coming in 1995! In bookstores everywhere!

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SlipKnot

A shell-based Web access that won't leave you tied up in a, well, you know...

The siren song of the World Wide Web is getting harder and harder to resist these days — unless you only have a shell account, in which case actually seeing what all the hoopla is about requires a few more steps than finding the latest and greatest Web browser. A few programs have appeared to fill the void, including a remarkably good one for the Windows platform, Micromedia's SlipKnot.

"SlipKnot allows shell users to continue using all their shell tools for mail and news, etc., and provides them with the only major service they are lacking," said Felix Kramer, a communications analyst with Kramer Communications. SlipKnot has several advantages over other shell-based Web access programs, Kramer noted. The program is kept mainly on the user's hard drive, and therefore does not take up space on the Internet Service Provider's (ISP) server (except for a pair of shell-side scripts which do not use up remote server resources). By comparison, many ISPs nationwide have banished the use of The Internet Adapter (TIA), a shell-based program that allows use of SLIP/PPP Web browsers and other tools but runs on the ISP's server.

Of course, keeping your ISP happy is only half the battle. The real test is, of course, whether the program is any good. The answer in this case: Absolutely. I used the 1.08 beta version of the software. (Version 1.1 should be out by the time you read this.) For comparison purposes, I selected Web pages that I visit almost daily via my personal SLIP account. I also checked out the SlipKnot home page <http://www.interport.net/slipknot/slipknot.html>, an excellent starter site with links to entertainment and business sites, as well as the latest version of the software. (In addition, a few pages with links to good starter sites are bundled with the program.)

SlipKnot users can ask for up to five pages at a time. SlipKnot then downloads the requested Web pages in order of request and saves them to the user's hard drive for viewing. The download time was about equal to the time it takes to load pages with SLIP or PPP. The primary difference I noted was that the page wouldn't display until every word and graphic had arrived on my hard drive. (Most browsers begin displaying text and graphics during download.) The graphics quality of each page I downloaded was consistently good, with one exception

— at least on my machine, certain graphics would occasionally appear to be "electrified" for a moment. This quirk, which I dubbed the "Frankenstein effect" (as in, "it's alive... ALIVE!"), generally happened while scrolling down pages, and didn't seem to do any damage — except to convince me that my computer or link was on the fritz for a few brief seconds.

In addition to offering very good graphics quality, SlipKnot is a considerate program — it can easily upgrade itself as new versions become available (with the user's permission, naturally. We don't want to forget who's the boss here.) Version 1.08's features include fill-in forms support via Lynx (you actually switch to terminal mode briefly to submit form data), Telnet capabilities, non-modem direct serial connections, and automatic redial, among others. Version 1.1 will be available in full distribution form (or, as they say in the commercial, "it's in there"), and will build on the former releases, Kramer said.

"Version 1.1 adds many features over 1.0, notably support for gopher, forms, and an improved terminal," he said. "Compared to 1.08, version 1.1 will have a customization guide for sysops and site licensing capabilities built in."

To run SlipKnot you will need the following: Windows 3.1 (or higher) in 386 Enhanced Mode, or Windows for Workgroups; at least four megabytes of memory (eight megabytes is recommended — the company has noted some

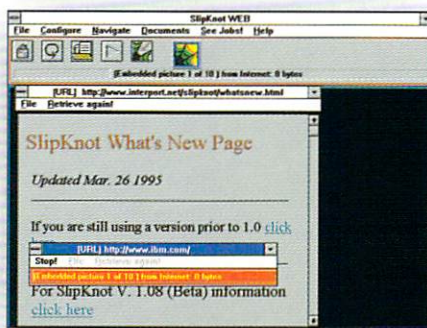
memory deficiency errors at four megabytes); at least two megabytes of available hard disk space (SlipKnot requires 1.5 megabytes, with additional space for downloading documents); and a mouse or other pointing device (SlipKnot cannot be controlled with a keyboard alone). But wait, there's more. Your ISP must have either Lynx 2.2 (or later) or WWW available on its server, and a program to send you files via the Xmodem or Ymodem protocol. The server must also allow you full access via a UNIX com-

mand prompt; menu-driven systems won't work. SlipKnot version 1.08 and later is also compatible with the Zmodem and Kermit protocols. And finally, you will have to download SlipKnot itself via anonymous FTP, unless your server already has it available to you online. SlipKnot is also available on disk from Software Labs (800.569.7900) and is scheduled to appear in several book/CD-ROM bundles any minute now.

The SlipKnot shareware programs are designed to automatically disable themselves after a certain number of downloads (200 for version 1.08). The program costs \$29.95 to register in North America, Europe and Japan, and \$20 in all other areas.

"We wanted to make the product affordable in less developed nations, where people earn less," Kramer said.

Additionally, Micromedia donates a total of 10 percent of SlipKnot's gross revenues to a pair of refugee charities: The International Rescue Committee and the Center for Victims of Torture (both receive five percent). The donations are in recognition of SlipKnot developer Peter Brooks, who fled his native Hungary as a refugee in 1956. Brooks arrived in Los Angeles five years later, and now resides in the U.S. ■■■■



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