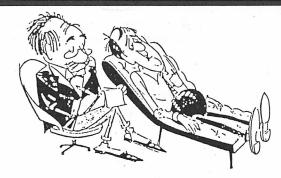
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ASK DR. ALBERT

Dear Dr. Albert,

I have been attempting to install an expansion serial board in a 2086 and can't seem to get it going. I thought the board might be defective, but a replacement board exhibits the same problems. Any guesses?

Dear Serial Board,

First thing to check is the Operating System Version. If you aren't on Version 3.4, the 2086 will only support 20 serial ports, even though it looks like it should work on earlier versions.

Dear Dr. Albert,

I want to install a 700 meg ESDI hard disk on my Series 2000, but I understand there is no way to

scan the disk or to reformat the disk. Should I shy away from them?

Dear Shy,

Not at all. The SDX-2000 DP will let you reformat the 700 meg disk as well as do a scan on it. However, you cannot do a first-time configuration of the hard disk.

Dear Dr. Albert,

It seems like every time I open up a desktop Altos 586, 986T, 886, etc., even just to do a PM, it develops all kinds of problems, (tape, hard disk, etc.) How can just cleaning my machine cause this?

Dear Cleaner,

After a period of time the DC cables in your machine develop corrosion similar to that of a car battery. This generates resistance heat and a voltage loss in your cable. Also, the multi-bus and CPU-to-controller interconnect cables get a little brittle. Since the header-type connector (in the 50 pin size at least) is unstable to start with, just opening the case will create opens and shorts within the cable ends. DON'T PM or attempt to work on an old desktop without replacing these cables:

586/586T Power cables, #510-12559-001 Multi-bus cables (2), #510-16690-001 886 Power cable, #510-16690-001.■

CSSC Announces

2nd "UNIX Opportunities" Seminar August 9 - 10

... "we can help each other through a sharing of experiences," said Jim Sloan, after the first UNIX Seminar. Well, we promised to organize a "large gathering of resellers" this summer, and we are! We are planning another UNIX opportunity to get together, exchange ideas, "share experiences", discuss new technologies and new ways to improve your business. It will also be an opportunity for you to review some very interesting product lines.

You are invited to Computer Support's second "Opportunites Seminar". There will be a separate meeting for paid members of URN (UNIX Resellers Network). There will be time for questions and, hopefully, some answers; time for a friendly(?) round of golf or set of tennis; time to examine new software; time to meet your CSSC support team, and share ideas and concerns with them. We'll try to keep the time flexible, but fully scheduled. If you



have a particular area of interest, let us know in advance and we'll try to get it on the agenda. Those who attended our first seminar felt it was very worthwhile. This one will be bigger and better.

Interested?? We need your reservations by August 1. Look for the Earlybird Registration form on page 5. We'll have more information next month, but mark your calendar now. We are looking forward to a great turnout.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS .

Vacations are my favorite time of year! I spent last week in the Reno/Lake Tahoe area and enjoyed it immensely. If you haven't taken some time off lately, do so as soon as possible. Gambling really isn't my thing, so, we found a "desert" golf course that was very challenging and pursued the ball through the sage brush. The mountain climate has always appealed to me, and I am now considering a retirement home at Incline instead of Maui. I still have some time before I have to make a decision, so it isn't a rush deal.

My oldest daughter (college senior this fall) came along on the trip, and it was her first exposure to gambling. She sort of reminded me of some people getting their first taste of the UNIX marketplace. She invested some of her money at the roulette wheel and found it pretty easy pickings for a while. Building on this initial success was substantially more difficult, and, when the trip was all over, she was out twenty-eight dollars.

The UNIX market is a little bit like the roulette wheel, and the negative results that some newcomers encounter may be more then twenty-eight bucks. The dollar volumes that multiuser systems generate are attractive when compared to PCs at \$495 retail. There will be more dealers, distributors and manufacturers attracted to this up-scale market, but a percentage will lose their stake if they aren't prepared to play the game.

I have long held the conviction that if people understood the mechanics of the game, there would be no players at all. Then, I meet someone with a book they bought on beating the odds at the table, and I realized that there is no impending shortage of players. Fortunately, it is possible to reach a point with UNIX when you can beat the odds. It will probably not be as easy as "UNIX Made Simple", but the industry can develop the capability of delivering a much more complicated product than is currently being provided.

One of the methods used to solve a complicated problem is to break the problem into smaller segments that can be more easily managed. Computer Support has evolved into a company that utilizes this approach. In our younger days, we attempted to provide everything that a customer could need for his business. We provided hardware and technical support, UNIX and it's support, and applications with their specialized support. Even with a fairly talented staff, we were sometimes in over our heads.

It became evident that a better approach was that of placing some limits on what we attempted to provide. We became a provider of hardware and UNIX support and moved applications off to specialists within the field. We have developed mutually rewarding relationships with vertical software companies and consultants. I think we could make a deal with the devil if he provided a good package and support for it. We are now moving more directly into providing vertical

ALTOGETHER is published monthly by Computer Support of Sioux City, Ltd., for UNIX/ XENIX multiuser computer dealers. If you wish to submit an article for publication, send to:

ALTOGETHER

P.O. Box 2159 Sioux City, Iowa 51104

We reserve the right to edit all articles for space and style. Deadline is the first of the month of publication. CSSC also publishes **Bull'sEye** for Bull products dealers. packages ourselves, but we intend to maintain a substantial separation with this effort.

A well supported vertical is truly a pleasure to work with, while a poorly finished package is a nightmare. We found several verticals that truly are well supported and we promote them with enthusiasm. The poor ones have been more than a curse to us, and, I would have to say, that we lost at least our ante on these. If the UNIX market niche is going to prosper, it must have some mechanism for weeding out the bad eggs. It is our intent to address this problem head-on with our verticals, and I would personally enjoy hearing from those of you who have found a marketing effort that works. No horror stories please. I still have a couple of nightmares hanging around.

... and then there were none!

NOTICE: CSSC is out of \$700 UPSs. We only had 52, and now we have none, so, if you missed out . . . hey . . . we're sorry.

So You Want to Be a Salesman...

Back to one of my favorite topics this month - upgrade sales. While we haven't publicized it a great deal, CSSC has always provided a substantial number of CPU upgrades for installed systems. The most popular has been the Series 1000 CPU exchange, because the performance increase can be very dramatic. While these upgrades require some technical skill to accomplish, they are totally transparent to software, a real plus.

The original 16 MHz CPUs are prime candidates for replacement because, a customer can understand why 33 MHz is faster than 16 MHz without being a rocket scientist. CSSC will exchange the CPU for a genuine Altos CPU (both with four megabytes of RAM) for only \$2,900. The installation requires about 30 minutes and involves removing the original board and inserting the replacement. If the customer needs an increase in memory, we will provide an additional four megabytes of RAM for \$500. The dealer total of \$3,400 compares very favorably with the cost of a four megabyte add-on from Altos spares (\$2,008).

The 25 MHz system doesn't benefit as much from the increase to 33 MHz, but a dealer cost of \$1,200 makes it worth consideration when you are pushing a system hard. It is something you should suggest when a customer is adding serial ports and terminals, because the additional load can cause degradation of system performance.

We have provided a large number of upgrades to 2086 systems, but the new CPU costs are at the point where we don't feel it is cost efficient at this time. Down the road, we hope to provide an upgrade to an 80486 for this system and quite possibly, for the Series 1000 as well. Yes, we know that Altos has one for the 1000; ours should be substantially more cost efficient. Altos will certainly not offer one for the 2000, so if we put it together we could have an exclusive.

All of this just means continuing support for your clients. If they need off-line storage, memory, or processing power, you should be willing and able to provide it. We have always felt that this area was less competitive and, if they are satisfied with your support, less price sensitive than new equipment sales. I would certainly prefer to sell a \$5,000 upgrade to a real computer than the same dollar amount for a PC.



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FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

From time to time, you, our customer, have need of special help from Computer Support. We offer a variety of services of which you may or may not be aware. We try to serve our customers on an individual and flexible basis. This column explains our guidelines and will be For Your Information.

Data Retrieval

What do you do when your customer hasn't done a backup, and their drive is dead? Call on Computer Support.

- 1. All drives sent to CSSC for data retrieval will be tested for repairability.
- If the drive is non-functioning, the customer will be notified. If customer desires, drive can be exchanged and exchange price charged.
- 3. RATES: Shop \$40.00/hr, minimum 2 hours. If labor exceeds 4 hours, customer will be notified. Customer will be charged for any media used.
- CSSC has some very sophisicated (read expensive) hard disk equipment. Even so, our success rate is only 50-60%.

In Praise of Plastic

When you buy a product from Computer Support and need to ship it directly to your customer, say, in Peoria; but your business is in Rockford, the most efficient thing to do is have Computer Support ship directly to Peoria. Just give us your Mastercard or Visa number, and your shipment is on its way. Your customer is happy, and so are we. There is no extra charge to you for this service!!

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Vonda Anfinson in her unusually neat office.

CSSC SPOTLIGHT



410-20061-001, 615-13876-001, 430-14164-001. These numbers and hundreds more flow from the memory of our Computer Support employee in the Spotlight this month. Vonda (with a V, please) Anfinson is CSSC's Altos Parts Manager. The terminal in her office is surrounded by stacks of bubble-packed, bar-coded CPUs, filter screens, disk drives, and memory boards - all identifiable by 11-digit numbers. But amidst the seeming confusion is order. Vonda knows Parts!!

Vonda's department is one of the busiest at Computer Support. Her phone rings constantly with referrals from salesmen, and questions from customers. Vonda (not Wanda), handles all orders of Altos replacement parts, and all warranty orders, and keeps her sanity and sense of humor, even when things get crazy.

"She's fun to work with," says Randy Thomas in shipping. "She always pitches in when we need an extra hand. She's very competitive, too." Vonda (not Bonda) plays basketball on her breaks and can always find someone to play "one on one". She likes to bowl and almost any clear day you can see her out for a brisk walk after lunch. Other co-workers (to remain anonymous) say, "We like her, even with her new hairdo."

Vonda's been married to Garrett for 17 years and has two teenage daughters, Jeanine, 16, and Stephanie, 13, and a one-eyed dog named Harley. Her family lives on an acreage south of Sioux City in Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, where they have a barn full of Mustangs, (the car, not the horse), Studebakers, Ford Falcons and other "collectibles". If you're in the area, stop in. They don't charge admission...yet.

In Vonda's former position as an employment counselor, she placed clerical workers and did such a good job that she was asked to interview all employment applicants. Two years ago she came to Computer Support looking for a more relaxed work atmosphere, and a challenge. Her Words of Wisdom are "Push Yourself to the Limit". She does this every day as an integral part of the Computer Support team. If you want Altos parts, call and ask for Vonda, (not Rhonda.) Whether you need 410-21885-001 or 615-21860-002, she's got your number. ■

The Time is NOW!

Actually, there is no deadline on being Bullish in the 90's. You don't have to make a decision immediately. But the chance to get "on board" is here. Hopefully, you have had time to study the packet that we sent you with information on BULL products. We hope you liked the first edition of the **Bull'sEye**. Maybe your interest in BULL has been aroused. If you are thinking about becoming a BULL IVAR, you can call our special line, (712) 277-BULL, and get the information you need. Don't ask for whom the BULL toils. It toils for you!

TECH NOTES: Networking the Altos Way

I'm not sure if the Altos networking solutions are really being taken seriously yet. There are a few people out there working with networking products, but there is a larger group that either avoids networking out of fear that it will be too much hassle, or they feel that many of the DOS/UNIX integration products are kludgy. Some dealers that could benefit from getting into the DOS/UNIX integration market have tried other DOS/UNIX products and have found them to be inconsistent, slow and just not fully funtional. After this initial disappointment, these same adventuresome resellers are not ready to play guinea pig again. Unfortunately, as a result, a very good Altos' DOS SERVER package hasn't been fully utilized.

Altos' DOS SERVER is very easy to install on both the Altos and PCs, and the cost for the combination software and hardware package that goes into the PC is still hard to beat by any network package on the market.

Altos' DOS SERVER package allows any PC in an office environment to be working on an Altos, using shared directories and printers in a very transparent way, and the speed of the network is impressive. DOS SERVER still cannot use multiple hosts, but if that is not a prerequisite, then any office environment with an Altos and multiple PCs should consider linking them together with DOS SERVER.

Altos has also done a good job of getting all the pieces together for a traditional TCP/IP network on the 1000. With TCP/IP and NFS, an effective mixed OS network environment can be put together, Resellers could find a very profitable market segment by implementing this kind of distributed network environment.

The 2000 doesn't have NFS among its available packages, but the machine is powerful enough to support a lot of users in the DOS Server-type of environment and there are useful applications of the TCP/IP network. The Series 1000 is a completely supported package which may be the best value in the marketplace.

EARLYBIRD REGISTRATION:	
Second UNIX Opportunities Seminal	r

Yes, I'll be there.		
Name		
Business Name		
Address		
City State Zip		
\$200 URN membership enclosed \Box		
I would like an opportunity to present a 40 minute session on a product or a problem.		
Subject		

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear URN Communications Director,

As a VAR in the Fund Accounting vertical, I am interested in the UNIX Resellers Network. My primary interest is connecting with expertise, which is difficult to come by individually. Although I understand my vertical market very well, occasionally some hardware or software opportunity presents itself which is beyond my current level of expertise.

For instance, we don't have the resources to purchase and experiment with UNIX networking in house. However, I have prospects that could use such a system. I would like to be able to subcontract or ...offer with confidence, a network.

We have written and continue to write software in the Progress language for Cities and Non-Profits. I would be in a position to share some of our six years experience and perhaps sell software to another dealer. I might add that we have some very definite opinions related to certain aspects of the business.

The other concern of mine is need of general UNIX support. I am concerned that Distributors with any depth of knowledge will be getting fewer and fewer. Dealing with Altos directly is the pits, and they may not need to be in the hand-holding business anyway. The ability to buy a support contract or buy time could be more valuable as time goes on.

Thanks,
David Noll
Owner, Noll Computer Systems

P.S. I look forward to the **Altogether** and read it cover to cover. I would like for it to be shifted to URN and part of the dues to go for its production.

Editorial Note: You present some interesting problems (solutions) that many in vertical markets may share. I would urge you to attend the UNIX Seminar in August for the opportunity to exchange ideas with others in your same situation. You can also work with a UNIX network in operation and get some training in setting one up for your customers.

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Unclassified ...

ALTOS 580-10 COMPUTER for sale. 720 KB floppy drive, 10 MB fixed disk, MP/M operating system, manuals & cables. Excellent condition. Will ship for \$200, continental USA. Rob Lee, Professional Microsystems, 25 Amaryllis Ave., Waterbury CT., 06710, (203) 753-1798.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY: Altos VAR specializing in COBOL accounting for distribution and manufacturing. Hardware repair contracts; software distributorship; source code licenses. Principals only respond to P.O. Box 40621, Providence, RI 02940 by June 30, 1990.

WANTED: DEALERS for manufacturing software; THE SHOP-FLOR Material Planning (MP), Shop Work Orders (SWO), Resource Management (RM), Production Control (PC), Estimating (EST). Complete Inventory Management Capacity Planning, Shop Floor Control. Better product, better price than all competition. Call Bill Burns (215) 364-2528 or write: Shopman, Inc., 63 York Rd., Jamison, PA, 18929. DEMO available.

ALTOS 8000-10, Four user with 10 MB Hard Disk. Will sell to highest bidder. Works fine. Also parts. Win Schaffer. (606) 278-7070.

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MEDICAL SOFTWARE DEALERS WANTED. Scientific Data Management, Inc. (SDM) is looking for dealers to resell the SDM "Clinic" software product. Eatablished in 1982, over 600 installed. Full featured, premium product. For information, call Dave Bilbrey, (313) 468-7600.

FOR SALE: Altos 580-2A at \$125 ea, Wyse 50 w/keyboard at \$225 ea., Diablo 1620, 1660, 2300 printers at \$50 ea. All units working when removed from service. Sold in "as is" condition. (713) 683-6824 Houston. (800) 366-6848 National, ask for Mike or Gail.

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2 NCR TOWER 32-400. (1) 16 port 8 MB RAM, 140 MB Disk, 45 MB Tape, \$6000. (2) 8 port 2 MB RAM, 140 MB Disk, 45 MB Tape, \$4500. Arcane Systems, Inc. (606) 272-4497.

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