BBS

THE BULLETIN BOARD SYSTEMS MAGAZINE

March 1995
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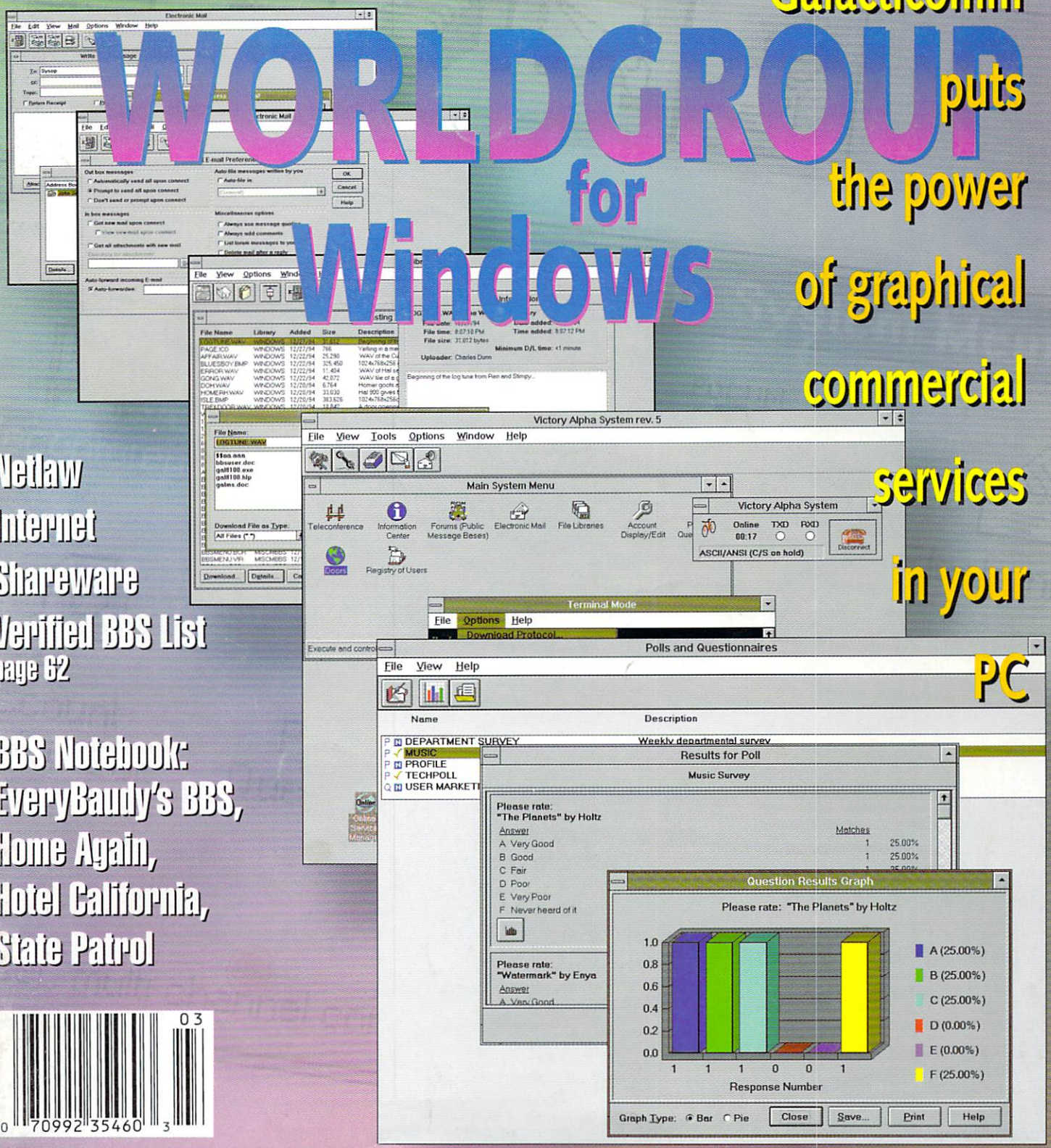
Galacticomm WORLDGROUP for Windows puts the power of graphical commercial services in your PC



Netlaw

Internet Shareware Verified BBS List

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BBS Notebook: EveryBaudy's BBS, Home Again, Hotel California, State Patrol

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Spring 1995

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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.

We live by three no's: "No Censorship, No Rules, No Hassle."

You'll find us like no other BBS:

- We answer your messages and comments.
- We answer your on-line pages.
- We post our address.
- We post our voice phone number.

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readme.txt

WHAT YOU KNOW: As BBSing travels through iterations of redefinition, propelled by innovations in software and frequent fresh takes on interconnectivity, callers and sysops worldwide are fumbling toward tomorrow with one hand on the mouse, the other on whatever gives balance.

Of course not all BBSers face the new frontiers with the boldness of a Lewis or Clark. Some take the slow road, quietly waiting for the "all clear," while still others exhibit a child-like verve as they wander this boundless new world for the first time.

Regardless of where the paradigm grabs you, there's almost always something arresting on the other side of that seven-digit dial.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: Galacticomm is introducing a novel way to explore those frontiers I mentioned. The Florida company's new client/server bulletin board system takes The Major BBS 6.25 and transplants it to another environment—Windows. But it's far from just The Major for Windows.

This system virtually rewrites every task the DOS scheme performed and multiplies their flexibility. No longer do you simply chat, for instance. You chat, send and retrieve files, whisper, and share a painting palette with the others online—simultaneously in real-time.

For a sneak preview of the soon-to-be-released system, flip to page 10.

Elsewhere in this issue, Shari Steele (Netlaw) offers an update on recent major changes at the Electronic Frontier Foundation. Mike Robinson (Internet Made Easy) checks out The Best of the Web and finds what voters deemed the best World Wide Web pages of 1994—see if you agree. And Michael Kuykendall (Macintosh Online) takes on the problems that come with finding, retrieving and placing Mac files on PC BBSs.

So no matter where you fall on that metaphysical paradigm of the BBSer's thing, we're right there with you to help navigate. If you don't agree, my mail box is always open.

Rick Robinson, *Editor-in-Chief*
rick.robinson@bbscd.com

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3008

NEWS

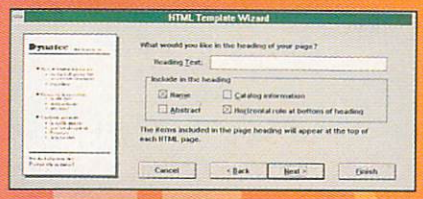
NetPublisher

EVANSTON, IL — "Businesses and other organizations want to get their information on the Information Superhighway—but they need the tools to do it."

That's John Kolman of Ameritech Library Services (ALS). He says ALS' goal is to "enable organizations to provide information on the Internet quickly and easily." And he plans to meet that goal with NetPublisher, a Windows NT-based publishing tool.

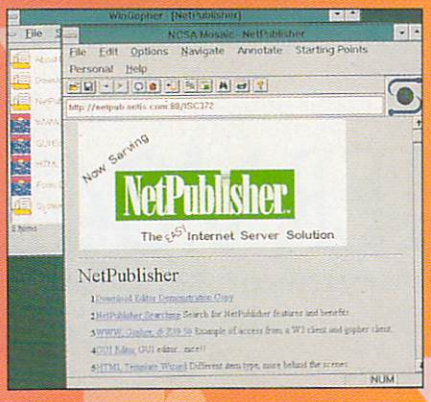
At heart, NetPublisher is a World Wide Web, Gopher and Z39.50 server that enables organizations to catalog and organize resources of all media types, including text, images, audio, video and multimedia.

When a user stores or catalogs information with NetPublisher, the inputting need only be performed once. The server then automatically formats resources for the Web, Gopher and Z39.50. Callers can in turn access the info with any Web browser, Gopher or Z39.50 client.



In-depth knowledge of HTML is not necessary, because NetPublisher features a template allowing sysops to customize layouts by prompting them for header, footer and other graphical information. NetPublisher then automatically delivers the information to the chosen format.

For more information contact Ameritech at 1800.556.6847, or point your Web browser at http://netpub.notis.com.



The BBS Option

SEATTLE, WA — With all the big media companies taking their products to market on the Big Board services of Prodigy, CompuServe, and AOL (among others), the Seattle Times newspaper did what more and more entities are opting to do—run its own service on a BBS.

Galacticomm's The Major BBS has been chosen as the software and "Seattle Times Extra" was picked as the name.

A number of reasons were cited for the Times' choice of a BBS over a dedicated area on a pay service, among them being the control factor and the ability for numerous users to access the information without the need for high-speed modems.

According to the paper, the focus of the board will be on local interests.

Buttoning DOS

SEQUIM, WA — Triad Software has released its popular "Buttons for DOS 5.0" into the shareware arena.

Buttons is a weighty pop-up that can be set to appear when users boot or exit to DOS from Windows. What's displayed is an attractive point-and-click mouse environment from which to launch DOS programs.

For those downloading a lot of RAM-hogging games, for instance, Triad maintains that Buttons for DOS solves the problem of resorting to a boot disk or performing major surgery on the AUTOEXEC.BAT.

"When a user needs an alternate start-up configuration, not only will Buttons create the alternate boot files," Triad says, but "it will also edit the alternate files for them automatically."

Buttons scans the user's hard drive in search of common DOS programs, automatically assigning them a button in the menu. When a DOS application is launched, Buttons disappears, taking itself completely out of user memory.

Registration is $29.

Triad Software can be reached at P.O Box 1299, Sequim, WA 98382, or by calling 800.683.3202. The program can be downloaded from the Triad file area of SWC BBS at 508.365.2359.

Clark (In)direct

MURRAY, UTAH — Clark Development Company, developer of PCBoard BBS software, has signed up as a premier member of BBS Direct.

Formed by Concentric Research Corporation, BBS Direct fundamentally changes the way BBSers access their favorite boards. Instead of dialing direct and incurring costly long-distance fees, callers can ring up a local number into BBS Direct for a $30 monthly fee, and from there link up with member boards.

"We are proud to be a premier member of BBS Direct," said Steve Klingler, general manager of Clark. "Their service offers our customers high-speed access to our BBS for a flat monthly fee."

WIRE

Concentric Research says local access is provided in 100 of the nation's largest metropolitan areas, with 250 others coming online over the next year.

"We make long-distance usage charges for callers obsolete," said Marc Collins-Rector, Concentric's president and chief operating officer.

Currently BBS Direct boasts 31 member boards, including Clark's Salt Air BBS.

Other members include Channel One, Software Creations, Mustang, Exec-PC and Rusty 'n' Edie's.

To access BBS Direct, call 800.991.4227, or dial them voice at 800.745.2747.

Wildcat! 4 Jolts Mustang Sales

BAKERSFIELD, CA — Mustang Software, Inc. (MSI), makers of the Wildcat! BBS software, says the latest release of its BBS package set company records for sales in the first four months of availability.

Version 4.0, shipped last July, has helped boost projected sales past 15,000 for the year — a 36 percent increase over 1993. And the company expects that when the counting's done, annual revenues for '94 will have broached $5 million.

MSI attributes the brisk sales to the product itself, as well as marketing strategy and an increase in "demand for BBSs in business applications."

The Wildcat! BBS Suite, retailing for $999, supports up to 250 concurrent dial-in callers, allows up to eight BBS lines connected to a single PC and is packaged with three add-on packages. A single-line version of the software is available for $129.

For more information, contact Mustang at 800.999.9619.

Onlightened: Awareness of Services Strong

NEW YORK, NY — A recent study has concluded roughly 40 percent of American consumers are aware of each of the four major online services.

Conducted by CDB Research & Consulting Inc., the research arm of Creamer Dickson Basford (a public relations firm), the study interpreted results returned by 356 respondents (of 1,030).

Three percent or fewer of those surveyed reported being current subscribers to each of the major online services. Past usage of the services at home, work or school ranged from 11 percent for Prodigy and eight percent for CompuServe to one percent each for Delphi/BIX and GEnie. However, according to the study, awareness is high: Prodigy, 73 percent; Internet, 58 percent; CompuServe, 56 percent; America Online, 44 percent.

"The high awareness suggests online services could soon have an explosion of subscribership," said Larry Chiagouris, managing director of CDB Research & Consulting Inc. "Taking into account this high awareness and the historical penetration rates for other technologies, plus the finding in our survey that as many as half of Americans now have home computers, we expect subscription rates to double in 1995."

To get a copy of the survey, call 212.887.8033.

BBS EXPO '96

PHILADELPHIA, PA —Philadelphia has been chosen as the host city for next spring's BBS EXPO '96, the exposition devoted to the world's online community.

BBSers, sysops, online services, software developers, Internet providers, Net surfers and anyone interested in getting involved with the continuing online revolution is encouraged to attend.

CONTINUES ...

BBSing the Internet

Still on the fence about tapping the Net? Maybe this'll nudge you—it's the latest list (at press time) of newsgroups carrying "bbs" as part of their title:

alt.bbs
alt.bbs.ads
alt.bbs.allsysop
alt.bbs.doors
alt.bbs.dreamlbbs
alt.bbs.first-class
alt.bbs.gigo-gateway
alt.bbs.internet
alt.bbs.lists
alt.bbs.lists.d
alt.bbs.majorbbs
alt.bbs.metal
alt.bbs.pcboard
alt.bbs.pcbuucp
alt.bbs.renegade
alt.bbs.searchlight
alt.bbs.unixbbs
alt.bbs.unixbbs.uniboard
alt.bbs.uupcb
alt.bbs.watergate
alt.bbs.wildcat
alt.bbs.wme
comp.bbs.majorbbs
comp.bbs.misc
comp.bbs.tbbs
comp.bbs.waffle

The EXPO staff is currently preparing for the event, which will feature demonstrations, displays and seminars from leaders in the BBSing, online services and Internet arenas.

Further updates will be posted in this space.

The Skinny

THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL, the largest selling legal publication in the U.S., has begun a comprehensive online information and communications service for the legal profession called Law Journal EXTRA!

COMPATIBLE SYSTEMS CORP. has signed with UUNET Technologies, a top Internet provider for corporations, and Net software publisher Netscape Communications to offer WorldWire. WorldWire is planned as a corporate Internet bundle.

USA TODAY has launched the USA Today Information Network, with the intent to seek opportunities online. And Gannett Media Technologies Inc. has been created to develop and market products designed to strengthen bonds between newspapers and their readers and advertisers.

AMERICA ONLINE has said it plans to buy the network assets and customer base of Internet backbone provider Advanced Network & Services, Inc.

INTEL CORP. has reworked its GUI for SatisFAXtion boards, adding dynamic link libraries.

GLOBAL VILLAGE COMMUNICATIONS INC. has released OneWorld Combo, a full-function, plug-and-play comm server.

PRODIGY'S joint venture between IBM and Sears, Roebuck & Co. is planning to cut it workforce by 100, down to 600. It appears the move is being blamed on lack of profits.

NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC. says it will license a system to play video games over telephone lines.

CONNECTSOFT INC. has announced a complete upgrade to its flagship E-Mail Connection. The product gives users direct connections with the mail systems of America Online, CompuServe and Prodigy, as well as the Internet.

DOW JONES BUSINESS INFORMATION SERVICES will soon be a major contributor of business news and financial information on eWorld, the interactive online service from Apple Computer, Inc.

BC Computers

Pentium

256K Cache
8 Megs RAM
1.2 & 1.4 Floppy
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PCI Video Card — 2 Meg RAM
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Microsoft Mouse
Mid-Size Tower [230W]
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420 IDE Drive
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SVGA .28 14" Color Monitor
SVGA Card 1 Meg RAM
101 Keyboard
Microsoft Mouse
Mini Tower (230W)

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DX2/33 ~~$1,025~~ $CALL
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+S/H

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Winner Of The 1994 Dvorak Award For Outstanding Telecommunications Technology!

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QmodemPro™ for Windows is the first to give you data, fax and Remote Imaging Protocol (RIP) graphics —— all in one outstanding package!

o other program makes it so easy for Windows users to dial into BBS systems ... or to get so uch done while on-line. Imagine — now you can upload by simply dragging-and-dropping les from the Windows File Manager to QmodemPro's upload window! We've also made ownloading better with such features as a built-in .GIF viewer that lets you view .GIF and MP files as you download them.

he awards committee especially liked QmodemPro's easy-to-use interface and support r launching both fax and data calls from a single dialing directory. With QmodemPro for indows, you can fax directly from *any* Windows application using our FAX printer driver ption.

urs is also the first Windows product to support RIPscrip graphics, so you can plug into the ousands of BBSs offering graphics and full mouse support on-line. And that's *still* not all!

- Multitasking support lets you download files in the background!
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- New BASIC-like script language gives you unparalleled power. Includes compiler and debugger!
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- 10 built-in transfer protocols, including Zmodem, CIS B+ and Kermit!
- 40 programmable macro buttons per dialing entry!

modemPro for Windows is the most flexible and easy-to-use communications tool on the lanet, with *twice* the features of competitive products ... and at the *very* reasonable price of nly $99 (suggested retail price).

No-nonsense, unconditional 30-day money-back guarantee

hether you're an on-line novice or a seasoned modem user, you can't go wrong when you o with the winner! Try QmodemPro for Windows for 30 days. If it doesn't win you over, st return it to the store where you bought it for a full refund. No questions asked!

Buy the best communications software and we'll send you this mouse pad free!

No other Windows communications program lets you get so much done with your favorite rodent. That's why we're offering you a free Mustang mouse pad when you purchase the experts' favorite communications program!

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Call toll-free for more information
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1-800-663-1886

Customer service hours: 8 am to 5 pm, PST, Monday through Friday

HOW TO GET YOUR FREE MOUSE PAD

To get your own Mustang mouse pad, just pick up QmodemPro for Windows at your favorite software retailer before March 31, 1995. Then send back the registration card along with this coupon.

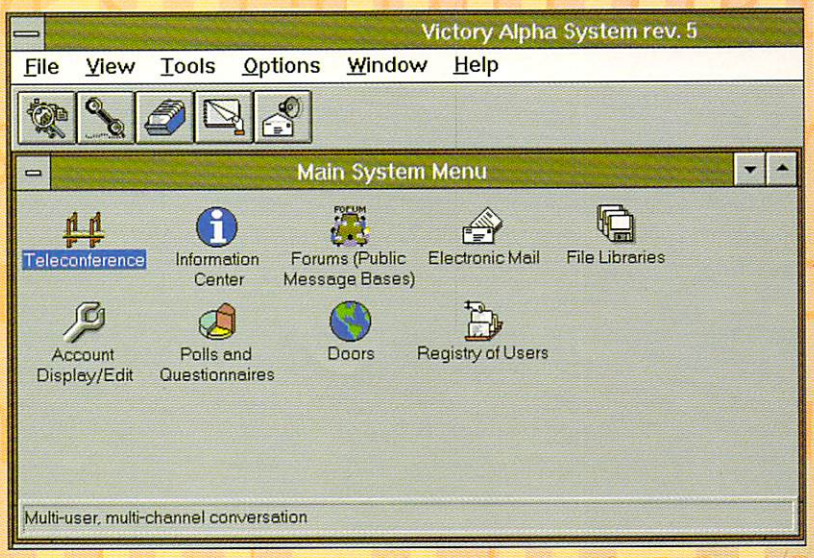
*Buy QmodemPro for Windows between December 1, 1994, and March 31, 1995, and mail this coupon — along with your registration card — to receive a Mustang mouse pad while supplies last. Void where prohibited by law. Offer good for purchases of QmodemPro for Windows when coupon is accompanied with product registration card. Please allow 2-3 weeks for your mouse pad to arrive.

Send to: Mustang Software, Inc., 6200 Lake Ming Road, Bakersfield, CA 93306

BBS

Worldgroup for Window

Galacticomm puts the power of graphical commercial services in your PC



We're frequently impressed with the swift advancements popping up in nearly all aspects of BBS Software. It seems that even before the ink dries on the review of one package, another system comes along groomed to top it.

This kind of rapid-fire competition likely spells salad days ahead for users on both ends of the telephone line: callers reap the visceral rewards, sysops benefit from happy callers. And this is true, now more than ever, in the public *and* private sector.

One shining example of this one-upmanship comes from the Florida-based Galacticomm, developers of The Major BBS. For the last two years the company has been covertly shaping a product by taking all of the elements of earlier incarnations of The Major and transplanting them into a whole new arena — often doubling, sometimes quadrupling, the thoroughness of each of those elements along the way. In Galacticomm's eyes, this is not a BBS, but a client/server information management system powerful enough for major corporations, and yet lucid enough to wow any teen-age caller or sysop. In short, an online system for every "group" in the world.

We call it a remarkable bulletin board system for Windows. They call it Worldgroup.

CONTINUES...

"We're talking about a unification of email, workgroup, customer service, sales, support, EDI, Internet — all into one cross-pollinating, easy-to-use, Windows platform. I think this will be the future of business-to-business online commerce, with or without the Internet."

Scott Brinker

Galacticomm's new Worldgroup, to which *BBS Magazine* was granted an early look, is the company's first foray into the field of Windows BBSing (begun by Excalibur BBS, MediaHost and FILEX).

Worldgroup is a turbocharged and multifaceted BBS that draws its personality from three key factors: a completely redesigned multi-threaded protocol, a basis in the Visual Basic programming language and its allocation of resources to the client instead of the server. Upload, download, send email, chat, and share a full-color, mouse-driven, real-time drawing board with other callers — all at the same time and without serious performance reduction.

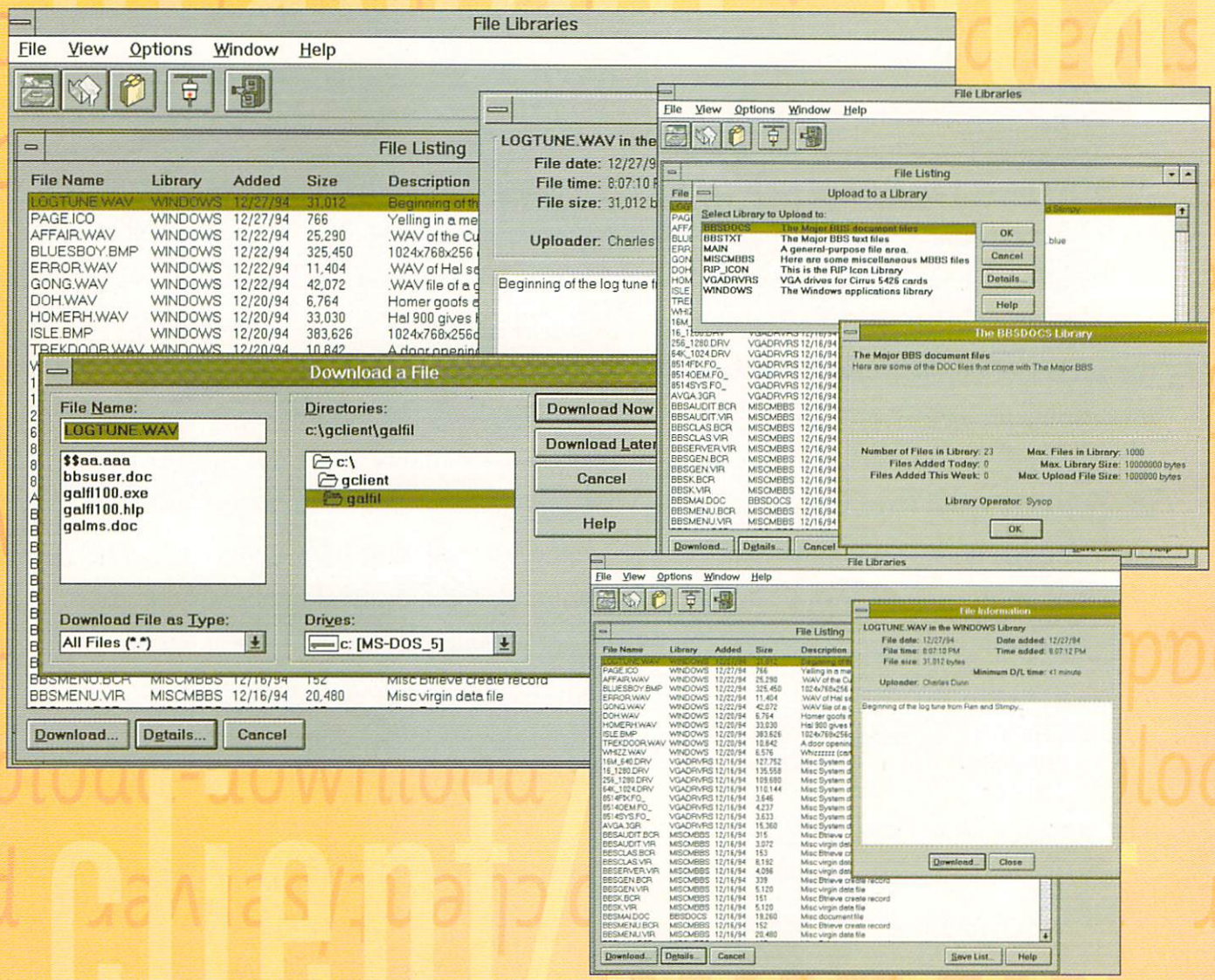
It is the brainchild of Galacticomm founder and sometimes author Tim Stryker, who has since turned the project over to Chris Robert (director of technology) and Bert Love (vice president of research and development), as well as Galacticomm's Bill Hyatt, Don Pitchford, Tim Stark, Jack Alvrus, Charles Dunn, and Dan Rhea, contributing applications-level development over the past year.

Company President and CEO Scott Brinker says the intention from the outset has been "to give sysops the ability to run their own 'America Online,' and in the business world, to marry the power of workgroup/email technology with the open communication of online services." Hence, the name Worldgroup.

On that subject, Brinker said the name came to him while sketching out a diagram relating this workgroup/email market to the commercial online service market.

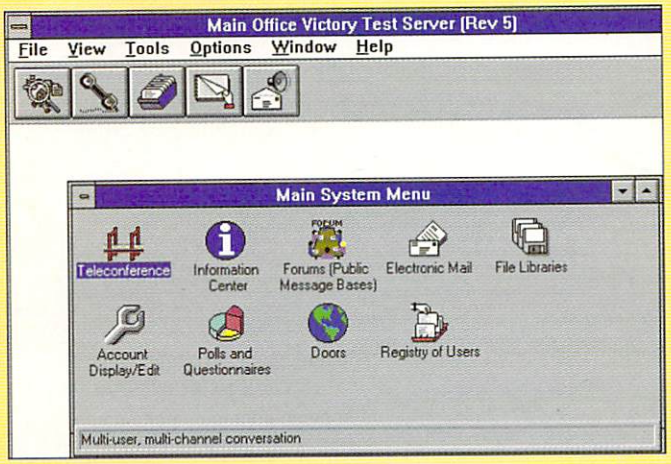
"The two sets don't intersect, and as a result there is this empty applications

CONTINUES ...



Worldgroup quick-tour

Using the Worldgroup client is as easy as using Windows. Once the caller installs the free software on his system, the Online Service Manager pops up as a group on the screen. Then as a board is dialed—via clicking on an icon pre-programmed with all the vital information such as user name and password—up comes the main system. This is a menu box displaying icons leading to Teleconference, Information Center, Forums, Electronic Mail, File Libraries, Account Display/Edit, Polls and Questionnaires, Doors, and Registry of Users.



MAIL

Selecting the Email icon brings up the window for writing new messages, checking the in and out boxes, retrieving stored messages from the filing cabinet, and managing the address book.

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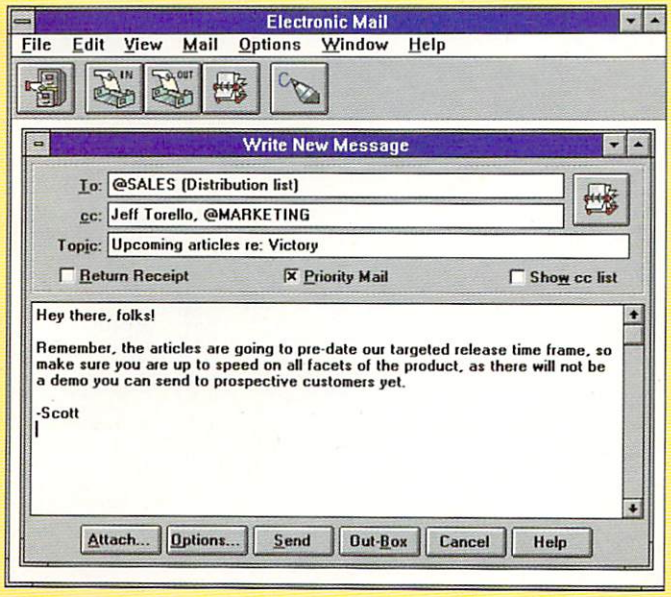

FORUMS

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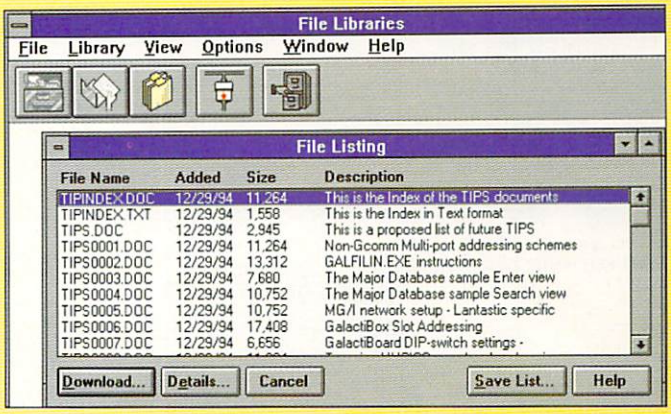

FILE LIBRARIES

Worldgroup gives the sysop the capacity to create as many libraries as he wants, including ones located on network drives and CD-ROMS. Once inside the application, members can search the libraries (those they have access to) by date, file name, description keywords, or popularity, selecting only those libraries he wishes to search. To browse a specific library, the caller just chooses an "info" button to display the library's description, number of files, files added today, files added this week, who the Lib-Op is, any surcharges, file restrictions, etc.

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Uploading files requires the caller to click the proper toolbar but-

CONTINUES...

space between them. So what do you call an intersection between workgroups and the world? Worldgroup. And unlike workgroup, which implies drudgery, the word 'worldgroup' conjures up images of people interacting with each other," said Brinker. "And whether you're talking business or consumer systems, the point behind all of this is to bring everyone closer together."

The original working name for the system was (Project) Victory, an unquestionably optimistic moniker. But, as Brinker recalls, everyone he showed the alpha software to agreed that it was far more than a BBS.

"So after much debate, we decided to give the product a new name, to really emphasize the paradigm shift this release will bring to the market. But I'm proud of our BBS heritage, and for all practical purposes, Worldgroup is The Major BBS Version 7."

Asked what he considered some of the more notable parts making up the whole now known as Worldgroup, Brinker immediately mentions the client/server "solution:" the placement of much of the work on the back of the client, which resides in the caller's machine.

"The applications primarily run on the caller's computer, which allows you to make full use of multimedia presentations, offline operation, and local CPU horsepower," Brinker said. "At the same time, this frees up loading on the server, too. It's a beautifully balanced relationship."

On the caller's side, said Brinker, "it's Windows — the real thing. It's intuitive, it's easy to use."

Indeed it is. Worldgroup's email, for instance, is modeled after the best of LAN-based mail packages: an address book, cut-and-paste clipboard support, visual sorting in the user's in and out boxes, a local filing cabinet, and user preferences for auto-forwarding mail.

In Worldgroup's Forums, Brinker enthuses, "you can list messages by topic thread (similar to CompuServe's WINCIM), you can see a graphical map of who replied to what message; just click on a button to download (in the background) all the latest messages, click on a different button, and so on. Need help? Just click on the help button—there's one on every window—and full hypertext Windows help is at your fingertips. We spent a lot of time making the online help just right."

Brinker continues with his "best-of" by illustrating the file transfer functions, one of which has eliminated the confusion of X/Y/ZMODEM.

"The user now has two choices: 'download now' or 'download later,'" Brinker said. "He can just double-click on a file in the library to download it. Or, he can review a list of files offline, collect his picks in the download manager, and then just batch-download everything with a single command button. All the file dialog boxes are standard Windows."

In the teleconference area (accessible, as with all features, with a mouse click) callers can have a chat window open while they're transferring files back-and-forth between users in back-

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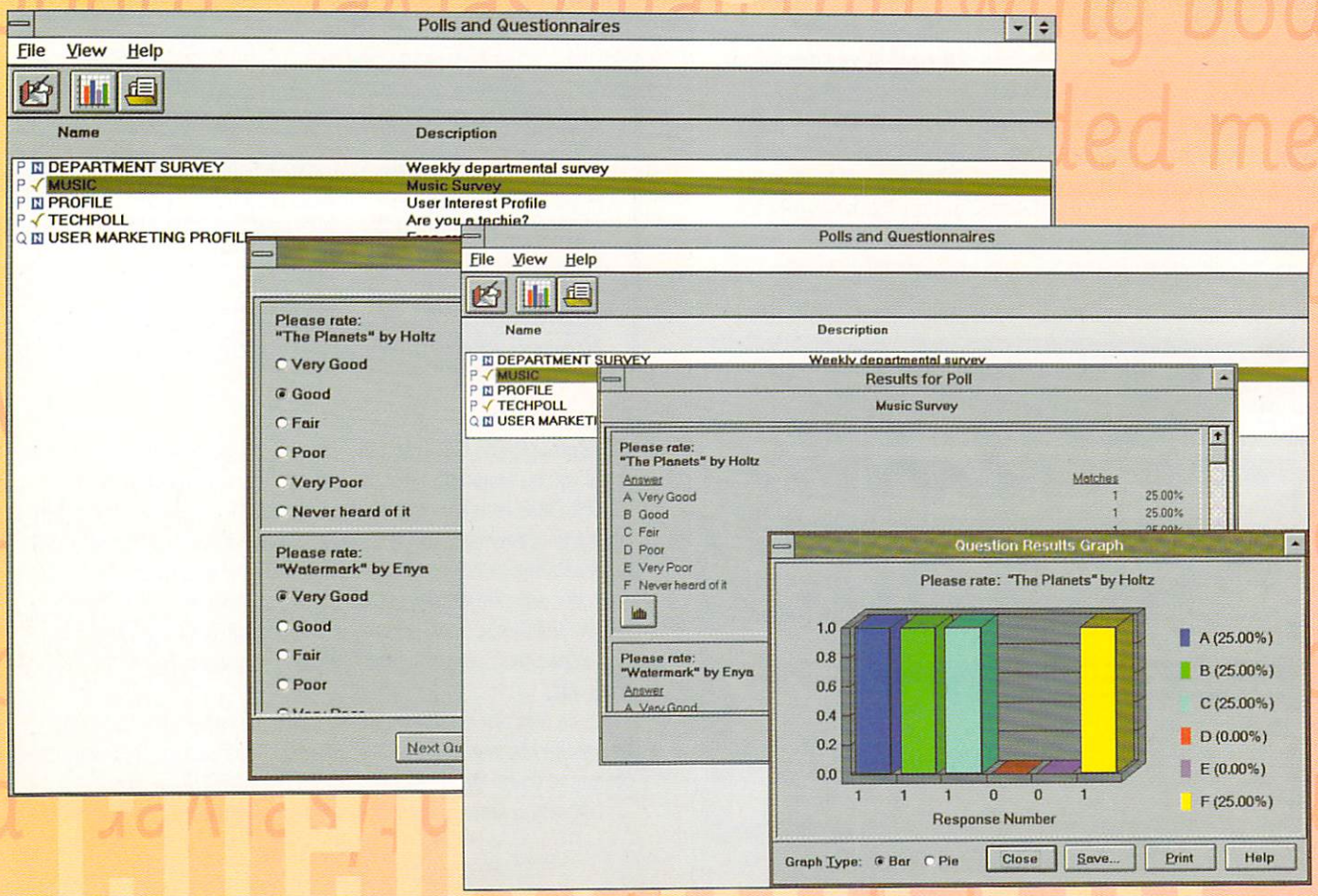

Using the Worldgroup client is as easy as using Windows. Once the caller installs the free software on his system, the Online Service Manager pops up as a group on the screen. Then as a board is dialed—via clicking on an icon pre-programmed with all the vital information such as user name and password—up comes the main system. This is a menu box displaying icons leading to Teleconference, Information Center, Forums, Electronic Mail, File Libraries, Account Display/Edit, Polls and Questionnaires, Doors, and Registry of Users.

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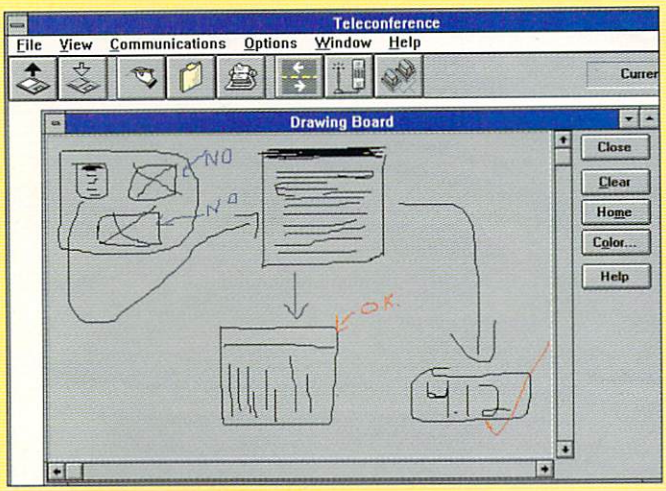

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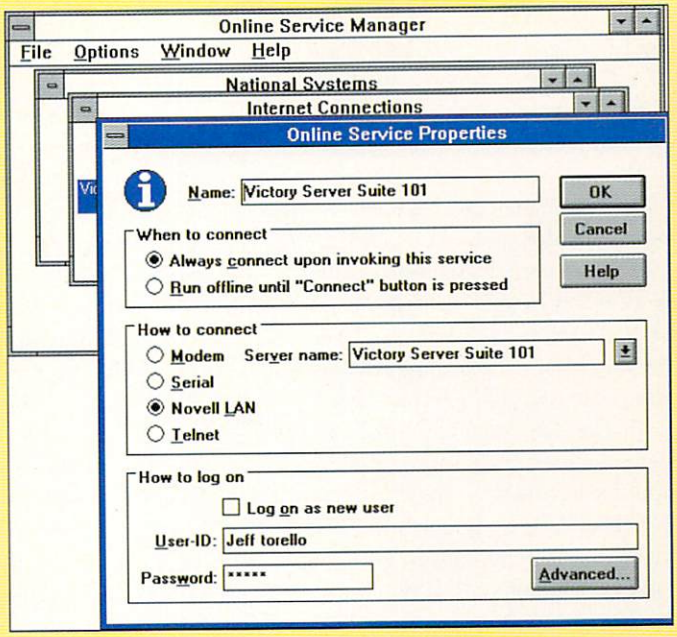

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Uploading files requires the caller to click the proper toolbar button, select which library he wants the files in, and then, from a dialog box, pick which files are to be sent. Both up and downloading can be performed in the background as the caller moves to other areas of the board.

TELECONFERENCE

Real-time conversations are always popular, especially with the bigger commercial services. In Worldgroup, the Teleconference is multi-channel, and each channel can have a moderator setting a topic. Channel discussions are displayed in a scrolling TTY format, with a split-screen window for each user to type in his responses—a user preference may determine whether the conversation window continues to scroll or not while the user is writing his messages.

Next, each caller can open a floating window displaying a list of all other users in his channel. Each can send private whispers or request a one-on-one chat. Whispers and chat requests appear in the window in a different color.

Callers can then scan other channels for topics and users, and, with a mouse click, join the desired channel. Once in the new channel, the scrollback buffer allows the new participant to catch up on

ground mode. At the same time, they can bring up a drawing board where others online can generate sketches with their mouse in living color, and everyone sees it simultaneously and in real-time.

"All of this happens at once via our multi-threaded protocol," said Brinker. "And third-parties are already talking about enhancing this with thumbnail GIFs of each user in a list box. You just click on whoever you want, and send a whisper to join a one-on-one chat."

Brinker says he could "go on and on about the user interface," noting its color bar charts users can bring up with a click in Polls and Questionnaires, the simple toolbar shortcuts in every application and unlimited file display pages.

"But to sum it up," he says, "the power of this for users is that it's easy to use, has the graphical sex appeal everyone wants, and on top of that, delivers real-world applications technology that until now has been absent from the BBS market."

On the sysop side of Worldgroup, operators can easily swap icons and Help files without having to touch Visual Basic. "We retained much of the configurability that has made The Major BBS so successful," Brinker said. "We've even maintained backwards compatibility for most Version 6 third-party modules on the server. For example, if a sysop has the ASCII/ANSI multi-user Trade Wars module, he can still run it on his Worldgroup platform. And when client/server users click on the Trade Wars icon, they will smoothly drop into a terminal mode window where they can play the game. When they exit, it returns them to client/sever mode."

Again, key to Worldgroup is that it isn't merely a Windows front-end to the Major BBS. Instead of the BBS machine (the server) driving the applications, the actual program executables are running on the user's machine, the client.

"The server just becomes more of a 'data server,' from which the client requests things," Brinker said. "In this way, the server can deal with any arbitrary data—compressed images, distributed dBase records, whatever—and just pipes it down to the client, which then handles all the real work."

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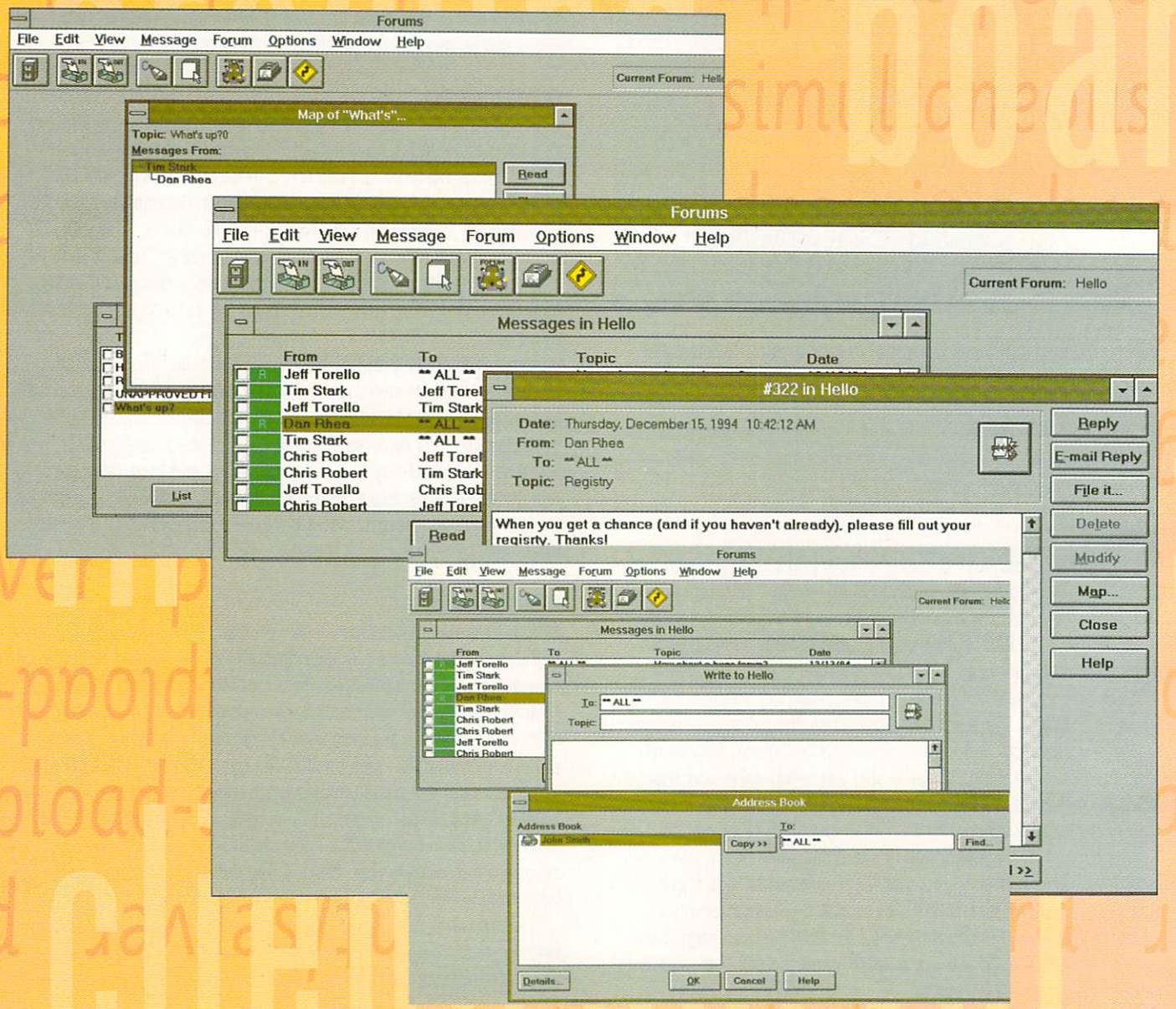

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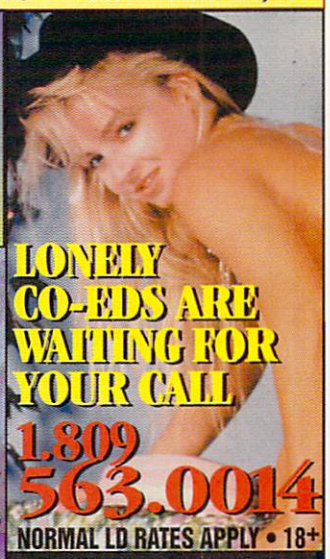

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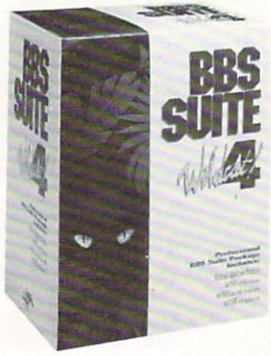

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BBS

"The power of this for users is that it's easy to use, has the graphical sex appeal everyone wants, and on top of all of that, delivers real-world applications technology that until now has been absent from the BBS market."

Scott Brinker, Galacticomm

Brinker sees this as opening up a "universe of possibilities" that couldn't even begin to be considered under the traditional BBS-to-dumb-terminal model. "There's a good reason why the rest of the computing world is migrating in flocks to the client/server paradigm: it maximizes power for the users and flexibility for the host server," he said.

In this respect, it should be pointed out, part of this model requires the server to accept full responsibility for all security issues, which the Worldgroup server does indeed do.

"Sysops can use our familiar Locks and Keys method of restricting access to particular features or data areas, preventing anyone from making "hacked" versions of client programs to try to do things they shouldn't," said Brinker. "Each piece of data accessed by the client—we call them 'dynapaks'—can be checked to verify that the User-ID and password that are associated with that particular client have permission to retrieve it."

Visual basics

Worldgroup's basis in Visual Basic presents obvious advantages when add-ons and enhancements are considered. Anyone familiar with the fairly simple VB can take the Worldgroup environment just about anywhere they want. Speaking of some of those specific advantages, Brinker looks to the standardization of VB, saying "you don't have to learn any proprietary paint program.

"You can buy books, you can take courses, you can hire consultants, you can use off-the-shelf tools, you can get worldwide technical support" for Visual Basic.

Secondly, he says, "it's incredibly easy to use. Anyone can write simple VB applications. As part of our client developer's kit, we'll even include most of the VB source to our applications, so people can just tweak them and add in their own graphics and multimedia bites," he said.

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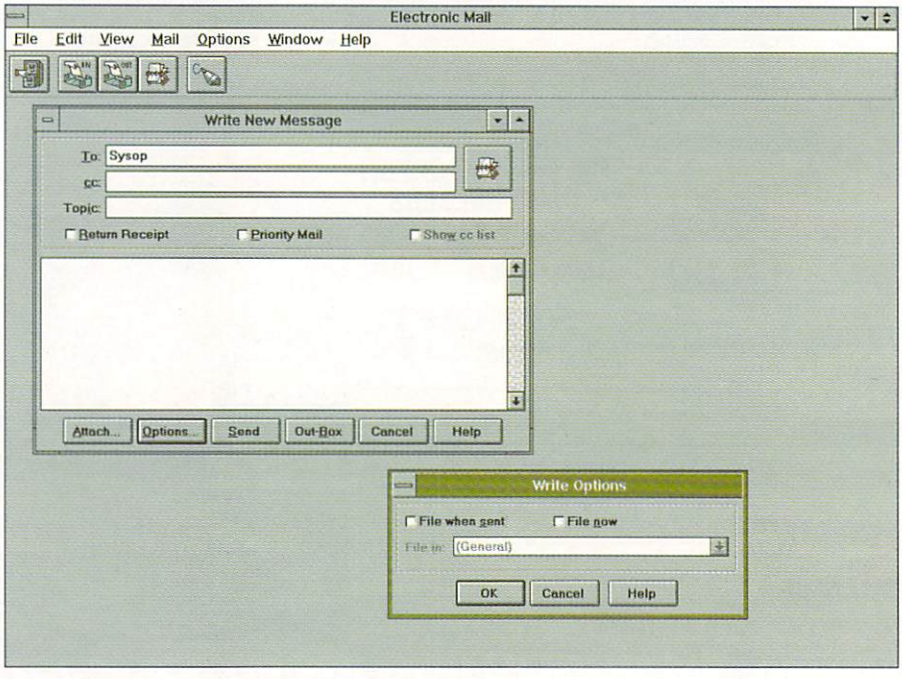

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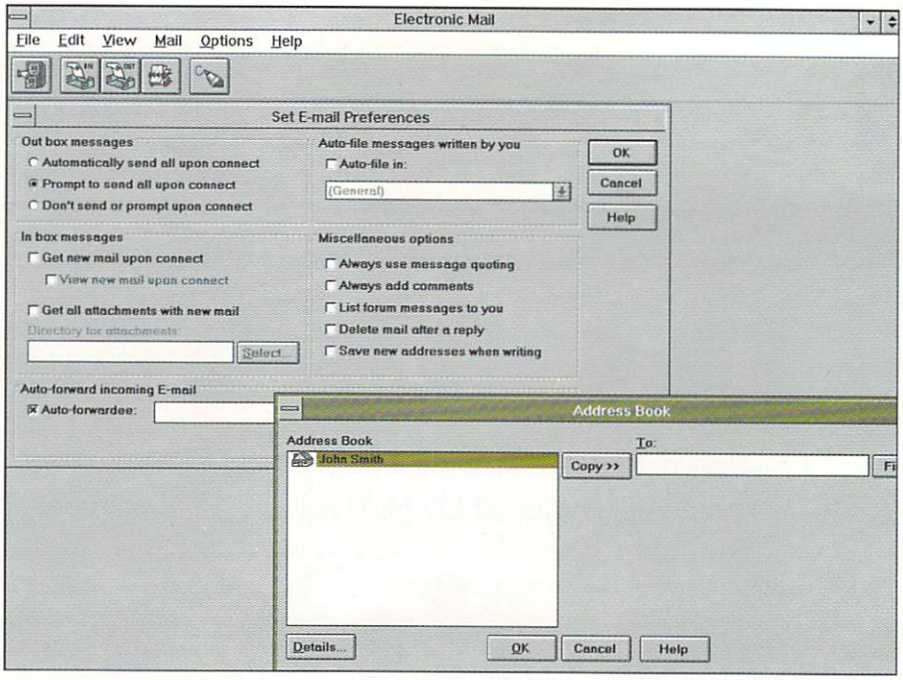
"Third, you can put power under the hood. Use Visual Basic to develop your user interface, but then you can use C and Assembly to write 'heavy' routines that can then be called from VB," he said. "We did this for our client communications and database engines. Or, you can write everything in VB—it's your choice."

The fourth major point deals with the range of VB custom controls programmers can choose from: "Several hundred commercial VB developers offer things such as plug-in JPEG, GIF, TIFF, PCX support, compression and encryption technologies—a plethora of user interface gadgets," Brinker said.

"And the great thing about this is that for all these technologies and new ones yet to come, you don't have to wait for Galacticomm to develop them. If anyone develops a tool for VB, and a huge wave of people do, you can use it right away. For that matter, anything you can do in Windows you can add to your Worldgroup applications without Galacticomm even having to know about it."

And since VB has proven such a success in the general market, there are already beta versions waiting for Windows 95. Therefore, users can smoothly upgrade, Brinker assures, to that platform when it comes out. "You won't have to wait two years for Galacticomm to develop support for it.



You'll just have it inherently through this model."

But suppose you have no desire to learn VB, but still want the benefits of some of the potentially incredible applications possible with the language? Galacticomm's answer is simple: third-parties.

The company has always considered its third-party developers to be one of its two biggest strengths, the other being the open architecture of the product itself.

Worldgroup takes this to a whole new level now, allowing developers to run wild with the possibilities.

"Some of the applications possible include online shopping with JPEG color photos, 'replicating' client/server databases, workgroup suites including project management tools, local/remote sales and inventory systems, awesome multiplayer games with animation and sound and control via joystick or mouse (or eventually VR gloves and helmets), collections of 'global' command floating toolbars, and matchmaker programs with MPEG video clips," Brinker says. "In addition, all those 500,000 Visual Basic programmers out there are now going to be able to use this as a toolkit for creating custom online services and hot new add-on modules. I think we're going to see this entire market explode with cool extensions of every shape and color."

Going big-time

This brings up the question of "how far can this go?" That is, will sysops truly be running "little America Onlines" as previously suggested—services that exceed the flexibility and erase the limitations of the huge commercial online service? Brinker thinks so, admitting Worldgroup shares AOL's characteristic advantage of a standard Windows interface. "But it goes beyond that in a number of ways.

"Our multi-threaded protocol elimi-

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For individuals and organizations seeking their own place in cyberspace, but feel a little like Will Robinson and the crew of "Lost in Space," Galacticomm's recently formed Network and Integrated Services Division (NIS) might have a solution.

According to Galacticomm, NIS will plan and implement interactive solutions to get organizations up and running fast with their own custom-tailored online service.

"We created this new division to give these customers everything they need for a professional online service," said Scott Brinker, Galacticomm CEO, "from software and hardware components to business and marketing strategies."

NIS' plan is to stay on top of all the latest technologies to help clients gain a competitive edge in the marketplace. Currently, the Internet is the "killer app," according to Brinker. NIS will help organizations create their own interactive services on the Net and offer Internet access to employees, customers and others.

World Wide Web (WWW), probably the hottest place for organizations to promote themselves or disseminate information over the Internet, will be utilized as a locale for NIS-designed WWW sites with hypertext-linked multimedia pages that users can navigate with Mosaic and other browsers.

Other services NIS can integrate for clients include email and wide-area workgroup applications, customer service systems, secure online ordering, electronic commerce programs (EDI), document and information dissemination, and databases. NIS will consult with clients to get a clear picture of the system they are envisioning, and then produce a blueprint for making it happen. With out-of-the-box software from Galacticomm and Integrated Software Vendors (ISVs) — combined with custom programming, if necessary — NIS plans to offer complete online solutions. And on a smaller scale, Galacticomm says the division will offer simple fine-tuning of existing systems.

For organizations with in-house systems analysts, the division offers training in the areas of configuring and managing an online system. Training courses for end-users are also available. In addition, yearly support contracts offer advanced technical support to assist in-house staff in configuring their systems, establishing network connections, creating new services, and other special projects.

New division offers custom services

NIS is being guided by Galacticomm newcomer Ken Royer, most recently with the U.S. Department of Commerce, where he was the systems manager for FedWorld Information Network — a system recognized by many as the best government BBS.

"NIS will bring clients the knowledge of online technology that we've gained as the world's leading online software developer, as well as a fresh perspective in creating onlines solutions," Royer said. "By outsourcing system integration, organizations will save time and money. They'll eliminate the cost of hiring a high-level developer, and we'll ensure that they select the most cost-effective and appropriate products to create a successful online service."

nates a lot of the waiting that AOL clients tend to experience. For instance, with Worldgroup, you can download updates in the background and you can do mail transfers in the background," he said. "Our applications are also more client-oriented, and can be used in an offline mode much more effectively."

But the big difference between Worldgroup and America Online is the sysop.

"Anyone can run their own Worldgroup, and they can run it the way they like it, with whatever content and applications they want to offer," Brinker said.

"It's 100 percent under their control, and they get 100 percent of the revenue and brand recognition generated from their efforts. You can't do that with America Online."

Worldnet

On the Internet front, AOL and other services have hustled different variations of connectivity, trying desperately to meet user demand. Galacticomm is not lost on this point either.

On the server side of Worldgroup, sysops can use the Internet Connectivity Option (ICO) to add full telnet in and out, FTP client and server, and basic WWW server capabilities.

"In about a month, Version 2.0 of the ICO will be released, and it will include SMTP, NNTP, and pass-through SLIP, among other goodies," Brinker said.

"On the client, we've included support for telnet connections, so that if the user has something like WINSOCK installed, he can just ride on top of that and connect into a Worldgroup server running the ICO. The entire Worldgroup client/server protocol can run smoothly on top of telnet—in effect, we're just using the Internet as a relatively low-cost, relatively high-bandwidth network."

And, as Galacticomm's assures, the system fully supports all modems, serial, LAN, X.25, Internet and ISDN.

For whom, Worldgroup?

Initially, Galacticomm sees current sysops moving to the Worldgroup platform (or upgrading at a special deal for existing Major customers—whose number tops 22,000) for, as they put it, one simple reason: it will give them the access to win subscribers from mass market audiences.

"If you can combine the vertical/regional specialization of BBSs, along with the dynamic innovation of sysops," says Brinker, "along with the interface of America Online, and toss in full Internet support, you've got a powerhouse combination."

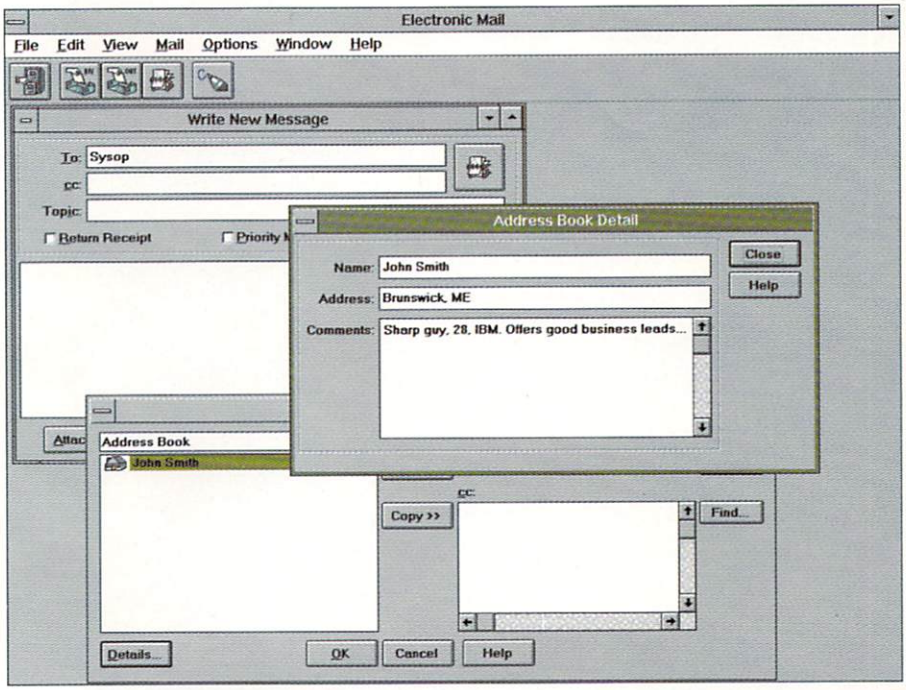
Brinker said he also thinks Worldgroup "will be just the ticket" for businesses seeking the best way to get online, and to tie in their outside world communications with their inside human resources.

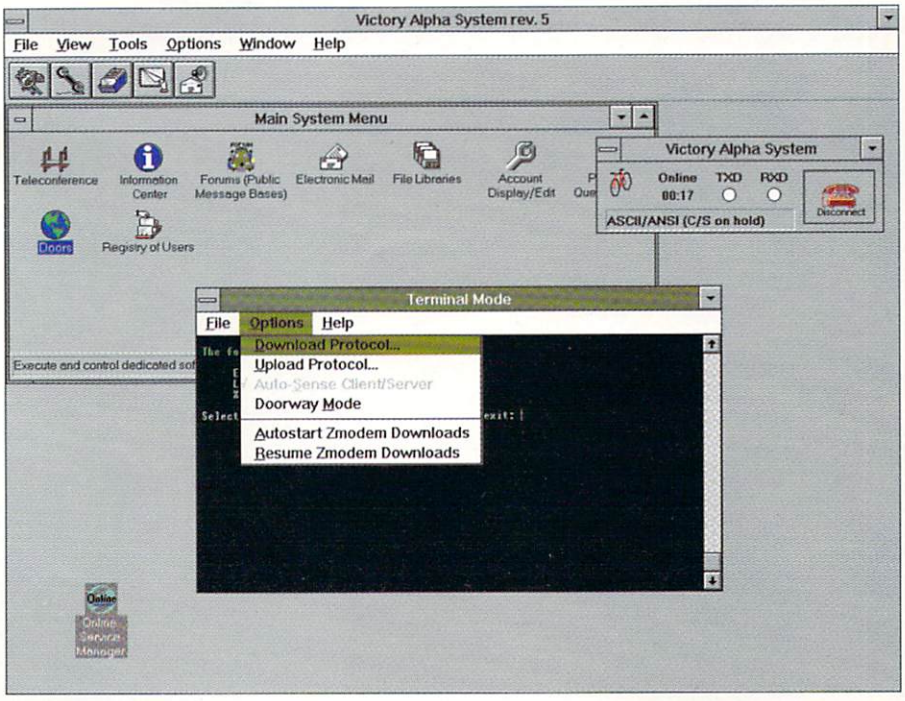
"We're talking about a unification of email, workgroup, customer service, sales, support, EDI, Internet—all into one cross-pollinating, easy-to-use, Windows platform, he said. "I think this will be the future of business-to-business online commerce, with or without the Internet."

Galacticomm plans a shipping date for Worldgroup of late March or early April. The street price will remain below $500, although, as Brinker points out, "we'll be giving people way more for their money than any other alternative. I still think the power of this technology is in the masses, and I want this to be within the reach of anyone who's serious about starting their own online service."

The upgrade price for existing Major customers has not yet been set, but Galacticomm claims very special deals await these sysops. The client-side development kit will sell for under $500.

For more information contact Galacticomm at 800.328.1128. Or email (sales) at sales@gcomm.com.





The Juggling Protocol

The Galacticomm Client/Server Protocol (GCSP) is a true multi-threaded protocol, which allows up to 32 simultaneous "threads" between each client machine and server. Callers can update their database application while uploading new mail and downloading the latest messages from chosen newsgroups. "It maximizes your use of bandwidth," says Scott Brinker, Galacticomm CEO.

The GCSP is also fully error-correcting, so callers are virtually guaranteed reliable communications. Even under varying line conditions, it's not susceptible to damage from line noise as ANSI and linear graphical languages can be.

"On top of this connection, the server and client talk with 'dynapaks' that can represent data and/or calls to 'agent' services on the BBS server.

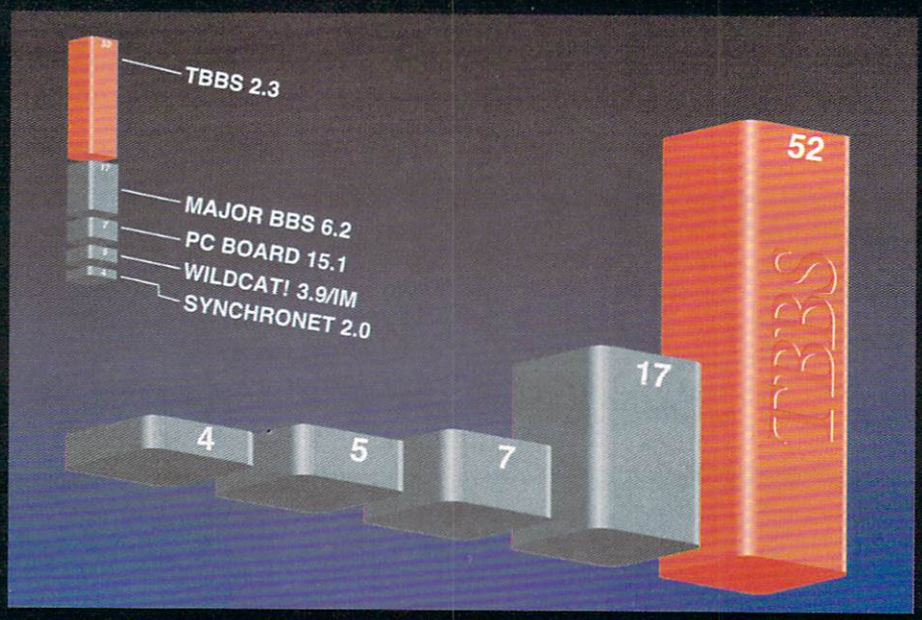
Dynapaks are uniquely named and can be up to 16K blocks of ASCII or binary data, or they can specify any arbitrary binary file of any length," Brinker said. "And then on top of that, we offer services to the API such as file transfer capabilities. For Worldgroup, we actually developed our own file transfer windowed protocol, similar to ZMODEM, with CRC32 error-correction and a full-duplex architecture, that lets it simultaneously send bytes in both directions without delay."

All of this was built at the low-level with C and Assembly, and was structured according to the standard OSI layer model to facilitate future porting and "extendibility."

"But those are the raw technical pieces," says Brinker. "The real power of the GCSP is its availability as a Visual Basic API for client application development."

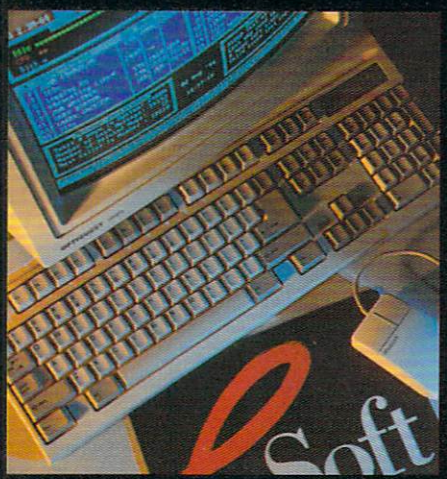
▲ In addition to complete documentation, TBBS comes with a 40 minute installation video tape.

▶ Number of simultaneous, full-speed ZMODEM downloads at 38.4 kbps on a single P5/60 CPU.



▲ The test was conducted in the eSoft Testing Lab. Each PC represents one BBS user.

◀ A 64-line TBBS and Internet Protocol Adapter (IPAD). Minimum hardware – maximum power.



▲ The high reliability of TBBS means its power won't turn on you. No babysitting required.

▶ TBBS' unprecedented flexibility lets your BBS talk to your callers in their language.

Power.

When your BBS succeeds, you'll need the power to back it up – and you won't want to buy a room full of computers to get it. For years, TBBS has stood alone at the top of the power curve in BBS software. It still does. To prove it, we put all types of BBS software in a room and tested them. As the graph on the left shows, the closest competitor can't deliver half the speed and power of TBBS 2.3. To complement its speed and power, TBBS delivers unprecedented flexibility and smooth expandability – on the minimum hardware possible. So scaling up as your system grows won't stress either your budget or your sanity. And TBBS is backed by eSoft – the company with the most computer communications knowledge and expertise in the industry. You can buy 64 user TBBS 2.3 for $1,995 *(32 user for $1,495, 16 user for $895, and 4 user for $295)*. When you're ready for the only BBS product that can truly deliver reliable online xBASE databasing, TCP/IP Internet access, LAN access and high speed modem support in an integrated system, then you're ready to step up to TBBS. Call (303) 699-6565 for more information and access to a demonstration system.

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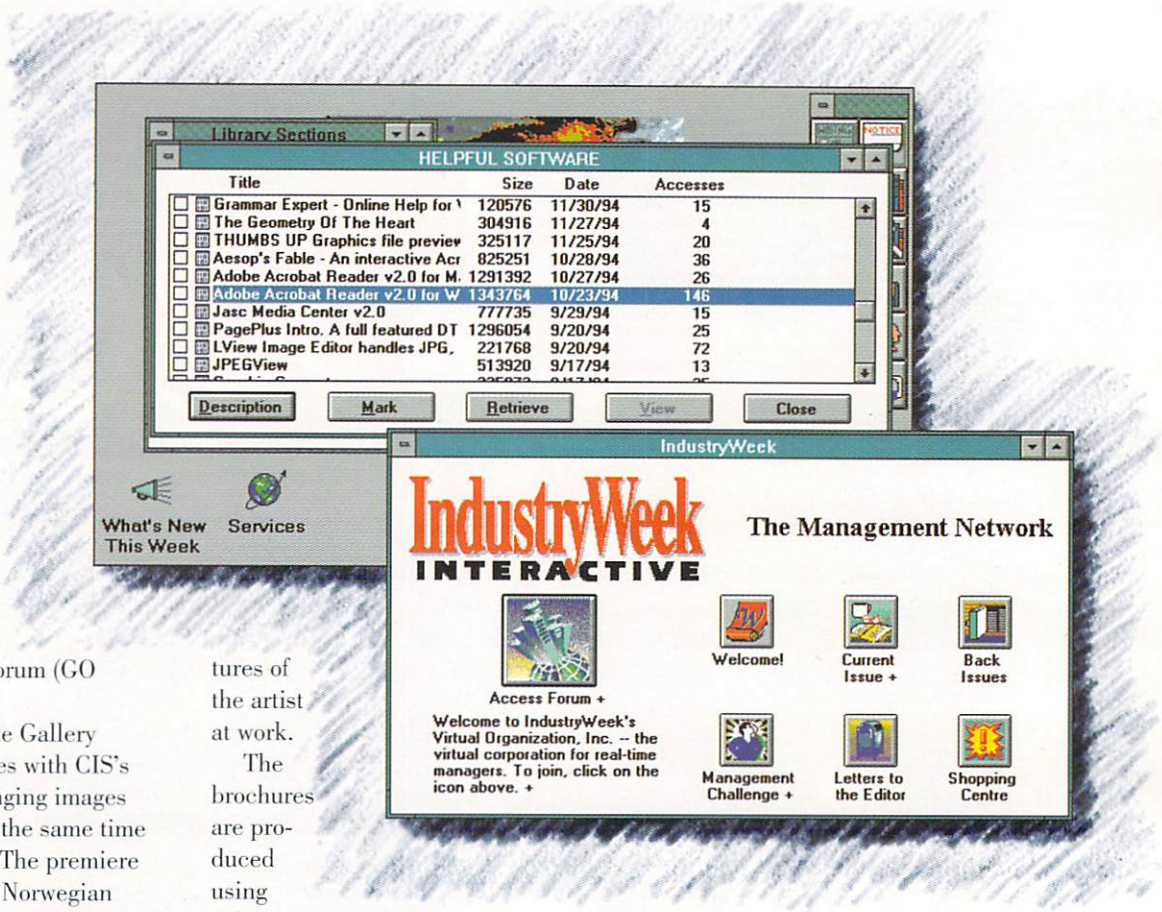
BY TERRY ROSSI

Art-Biz-Movies-Games

New entries on the commercial boards



CompuArt

CompuServe has debuted a joint venture between art galleries throughout the world and the Artist forum (GO ARTIST).

The forum's new Online Gallery joins participating galleries with CIS's 2.4 million members, bringing images and information online at the same time they debut in the gallery. The premiere show features the work of Norwegian artist Per Fronth, and is shown in conjunction with the Meisner Gallery in New York and Kunstuset A/S in Oslo. It consists of eight large, highly personal photographic images on canvas and one photoengraving/composite. In addition to being able to download images of each featured artist's work, the forum will present an online brochure containing detailed information about the artist, the pieces in the exhibit, an artist's statement, and thumbnails of all the pieces, plus pictures of the artist at work.

The brochures are produced using Adobe Systems' Acrobat file exchange software — which allows for the easy exchange of complex documents containing typography and pictures to and from any computer, regardless of make or operating system. A copy of Acrobat Reader is required to view the online brochures and it can be downloaded for no additional charge from Library 1 (Helpful Software) in the Artist Forum.

If business is more your cup of tea, IndustryWeek Interactive is a new "virtual corporation" on CIS. IndustryWeek Publisher Carl Marino defines the term "virtual corporation" as a new kind of organization that can deliver highly customized goods and services to customers on demand. Virtual corporations are characterized by constantly shifting roles and responsibilities for employees, an absence of organizational boundaries and strong alliances with customers and suppliers.

The biweekly magazine's online area

consists of a forum, the current print issue, an electronic letters to the editor area, a searchable archive of back issues and a store on the CompuServe Mall.

The Forum, called IndustryWeek Virtual Organization, Inc., represents a significant departure from the traditional forum structure in which message sections correspond to topics. The messaging of the IndustryWeek forum, while appearing as a top-down management hierarchy, is really an organization without boundaries featuring open lines of communication among the various functions. The sections include the Executive Suite, the Bean Counters, Product Development, Information Systems, Factory Floor, Supply Chain, Consultants, Grapevine and others.

"Our goal in taking this approach is to foster the same kind of cross-functional communication as you would find in a virtual organization," said Marino. "In effect, we're creating an environment that encourages members to participate in several functional areas to develop innovative solutions to both real and hypothetical management problems. We believe our current readers will benefit tremendously from the online exchange of ideas, and other CompuServe members will learn about our magazine's approach to business management."

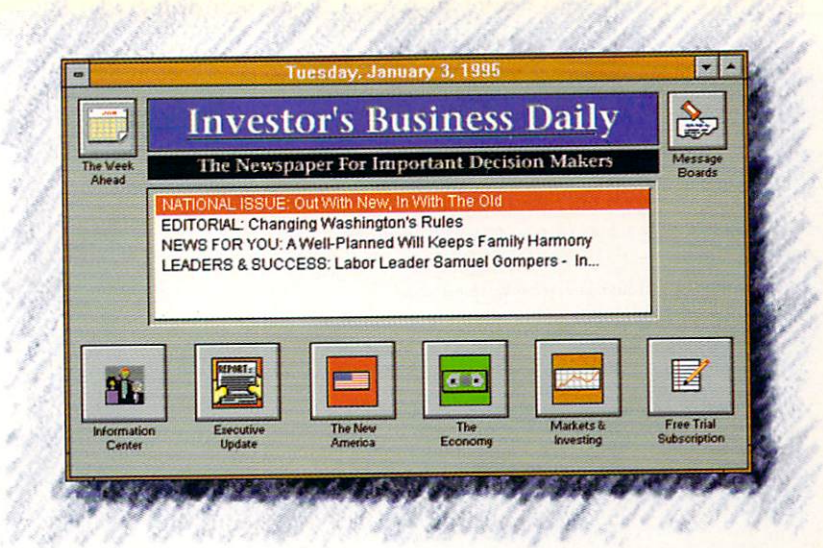
The forum library includes extensive background material on topics covered in the magazine — profiles and statistical information on the 50 companies that have won the magazine's "America's Best Plants" award over the past five years, surveys and research materials, and 100 reviews of management books.

IndustryWeek will also host online conferences with executives and editors from the magazine.

AOL Investing

In today's economy, investors need up-to-date information on the movers and shakers in the markets. We've all seen film of the ticker tapes flying across rooms of traders. What AOL gives investors is the '90s version of all that tape.

Today's computer user is hungry for personal money management — just ask Intuit, the makers of Quicken. AOL has a host of services available to subscribers to help them stay abreast of investments, markets and money. In late 1994, AOL announced the addition of two new services in this regard: Investor's Business Daily and Vanguard Online (from the Vanguard Group of Investment Companies).



Investors Business Daily and Vanguard Online join Morningstar Mutual Funds, The American Association of Individual Investors, The Nightly Business Report, Worth OnLine, Consumer Reports and a host of other services as part of AOL's financial services channel.

With the addition of Investors Business Daily (IBD) subscribers can read each day's issue, including a calendar of the week's events, financial news, editorials, executive updates and profiles on successful companies and individuals in the financial community. Additionally, subscribers now have access to archives of previous IBD issues, and can discuss IBD content with other investors through its message boards.

Vanguard Online features four topical areas — Mutual Fund Center, Planning and Strategy, Vanguard News, and Communications — through which investors may learn more about investing in mutual funds, asset allocation, retirement planning, and other investment-related topics.

Vanguard provides the editorial content and a steady flow of new and timely information. They also maintain a library of fund prospectuses, annual reports and other investment-oriented information that may be read online, printed or downloaded for later review. The Communications area includes an email service to Vanguard as well as interactive message boards through which interested fund investors may share information and ideas.

Prodigy jumps on board

Adopting the policy Delphi took last month, Prodigy is helping new users adjust to life online with a free bulletin board section.

With the holiday season past and PC sales up 35 percent over the same period last year, Prodigy saw a vast group of "newbies" coming online. With Prodigy software installed on four out of five new PC's sold through retail outlets, the company has made special plans to get these new fish acclimated to the water. The new bulletin board called (what else?) "New Member Bulletin Board" allows unlimited and free access during the members' first 90 days on the service.

Questions in the "BB" range from the basic—"How do I enroll another Family Member?"—to the more complex.

The BB is staffed by employees, special contributors and subscribers acting as mentors to help answer new members' questions about the basics of going online, including accessing the Internet, sending email, using chat and bulletin boards, importing and exporting files, and recommendations on areas to explore. The New Members Bulletin Board can be reached by JUMPing to "new member bb."

All the news that fits: That's what you get when you read Usenet newsgroups (or "news" as it is known here).

Usenet is the network of conferences

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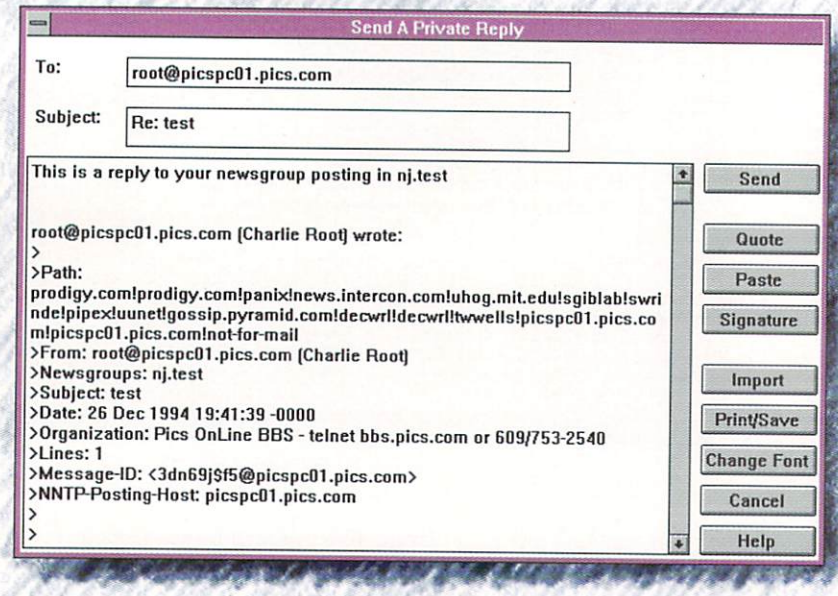

which sprang out of the early days of the Internet and UUCP-based mail system. It is literally 350MB of conferences per day, and it is now available on Prodigy for subscribers.

The service has created a great user interface for reading Usenet news online. Members can subscribe to newsgroups, grab the group's FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions), read articles by thread (similar topics) and add custom signatures to each piece of outbound mail.

Prodigy has incorporated some of the advanced features in UNIX-based news readers that I didn't expect to find. Features such as Ignore List (which allow you to ignore a subject or person), personal replies via email instead of news, custom signature files, keyword searches and many others.

Jump USENET on Prodigy, wade through the legal disclaimers, pick your newsgroups, and away you go.

Delphi goes to the movies.

Ever wanted to know about how films are made, about an actor or actress, about how special effects are executed? If so, the Entertainment section on Delphi should be your first stop. A quick trip to GO Entertainment on Delphi will show you they're well connected:

- Astro Predictions
- Penn & Teller
- Chat and Chat Games SIG
- Rolling Stones Critics' Choice Reviews
- Rykodisc Online
- Entertainment News (Variety)
- Star Trek: The Forum
- FOXtalk
- Studio Briefing
- fX Cable Channel
- Trivia Club
- TV/Movie Group
- Hollywood Online
- 20th Century Fox Films
- Movie Center
- X-Files
- Movie Reviews by Cineman
- Music Fandom

I took the time to browse through the forums and found some really interesting information. I started my trip at "Hollywood Online," the online source

CONTINUES ...

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Full Text Searching

Need to add powerful full path text searching software to your business BBS? Cheetah is the solution!

Cheetah was designed by APDI, a leader in the BBS service industry. APDI listened to corporations, associations and government agencies who need a simple full text searching software to work with their BBS. From these talks APDI designed and developed Cheetah.

Cheetah enables you to search online for any combination of words in seconds! Cheetah lets your users access large amounts of data quickly and easily.

Cheetah also performs phase and proximity searches. Users can specify word proximity within a paragraph or sentence and the file viewer conveniently highlights all found text.

Unlike other full text searching software, Cheetah was specifically designed for BBSs. Cheetah keeps track of users' time left on the BBS, mode settings, modem status and even allows users to download their search results using any compression software they choose.

Cheetah handles text and images — newsletters, magazines, even government regulations!

Cheetah is available in both serial port and Digiboard versions and works out of the box on Novell networks. Cheetah comes with an unlimited user license per BBS.

New Cheetah 1.5 version now shipping

- Images, GIF files
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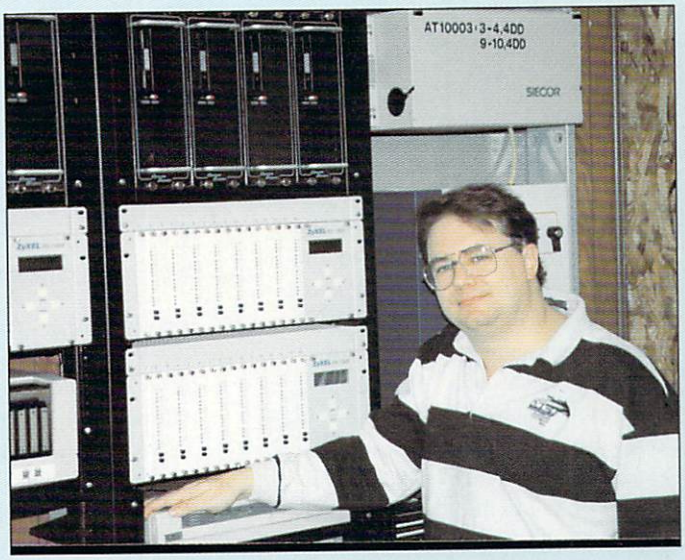
Cheetah 1.0 can be purchased at 50% off while supplies last.

So if you work for a corporation, association or government and run a BBS, or just have the task of building one, call APDI at 1-800-785-APDI and find out more about Cheetah's ability to give your users what they need.



Mark Burnett at APDI's BBS Service Bureau

"The BBS Service Bureau"

Companies looking for a serious BBS company to provide a wide range of services are choosing APDI. APDI is devoted to providing professional BBS services to corporations, associations and government agencies throughout the United States.

Typical APDI clients are organizations that need turnkey BBS solutions or advanced technical on-site support. APDI provides installation and support for WildCat!, Galacticomm, PCBoard, TBBS, and Searchlight. APDI is a Certified Mustang Software Integrator (CMSI).

APDI frees up precious time for you and your staff to concentrate on marketing your new BBS.

Most of APDI's corporate customers find it advantageous to let APDI run the BBS for them at APDI's location. APDI provides all equipment (like the BBS center shown above) and handles all technical support and navigation issues on your BBS. APDI's fiber-optic cabling ensures crystal clear connections and communications to your bulletin board system.

Many businesses wish to put a database online but find it difficult to locate programmers with the skills to assist them. APDI has a skilled database development staff and is on the FoxPro and Paradox development teams.

Now APDI puts your BBS on:
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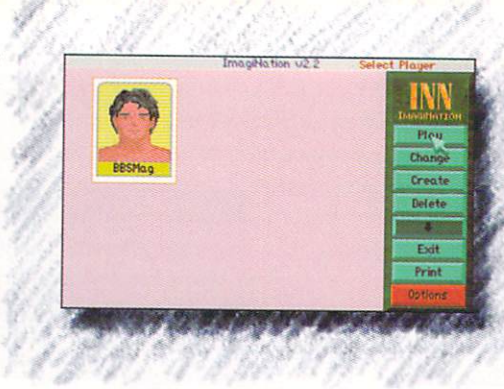
for Inside Hollywood. It's filled with the latest in Interactive Multimedia Kits for upcoming films, as well as special photo images, video clips and interviews with your favorite stars.

The Hollywood Online Forum is structured with a software library devoted to each of the movies it features, all packed with informative multimedia, photos, sound and movie notes. Hollywood Online's message boards also offer a wide range of discussion topics for movies and entertainment. It's rounded out with the usual Delphi goodies like Usenet newsgroups, conferences and databases.

Forrest Gump was one of the featured movies during my visit — a film I always wanted to see but never got around to. Upon checking out Gump, I was surprised to find the forum offered quite a bit of information about the film, including production notes, biographies on Tom Hanks and other cast members, a detailed description of the script, settings, filming locations and other interesting asides.

If Rock 'n' Roll is more for you, then the new Rykodisc Forum will likely hold an abundance of material to catch your interest.

It is focused on the medium-sized record company RYKO and the artists and bands on their labels.



The World of ImagiNation

If you fancy online gaming and entertainment, Sierra Online has a fairly new service called ImagiNation to whet your appetite.

ImagiNation is set up like the eWorld service from the folks at Apple. The service is designed around a world or nation and the main menu is a map to that nation. The service features a Post Office to read and send email, a Town Hall for help and information, the Phone Booth for finding other players and friends online, and the real attraction—games!

Among the places to visit is MedievaLand, where fantasy role-playing games—including The Shadow of Yserbius and The Fates of Twinion—allow players to match their skills against the dragons, monsters and dangers within a maze of dungeons.

SierraLand is the electronic amusement park of ImagiNation, featuring a variety of action and strategy games for kids of all ages. For popular board and card games, check out The Clubhouse—backgammon, bridge and other favorites are available with a nice graphical interface.

The jewel of ImagiNation is CasinoLand, the adults only online casino. The of-age can play casino games or socialize in Lefty's Bar with bar games or simple chit-chat. Within CasinoLand reside restricted and unrestricted areas: the difference being that in unrestricted areas, adult subject matter and language may be discussed freely and openly.

A special form must be signed and either faxed or mailed in for access to CasinoLand.

The ImagiNation network costs $9.95 per month, which includes five hours of the service. Additional hours are billed to at $3.50 per hour. For sign-up information and software, call 1-800-IMAGIN-1.

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Programmable	Yes	No	Extra	Extra	Extra
Multiple command shells	Yes	No	No	No	No
Intelligent DigiBoard	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Int14h device support	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Standard serial ports	Up to 10	No	Up to 4	Up to 2	Up to 2
Caller ID security	Yes	No	Extra	Extra	No
Nested security logic	Yes	No	No	No	No
Multichannel chat	Yes	Extra	Yes	Yes	Yes
Private user chat	Yes	No	Extra	Yes	Yes
Offline reader support	Yes	Yes	Extra	Yes	Extra
QWK networking	Yes	Yes	Extra	No	Yes
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

Features and prices compiled from vendor supplied information 2/94, are subject to change without notification. Wildcat!IM, PCBoard/M, MajorBBS, TBBS, QWK, FidoNet, PostLink, RIME, RIPscrip, Novell, and DOS are trademarks or their respective companies. Third party utilities may be required for some message network technologies.
* for 8 nodes Wildcat!IM requires a 250 node license, PCBoard/M requires a 10 node license, TBBS requires a 16 node license.

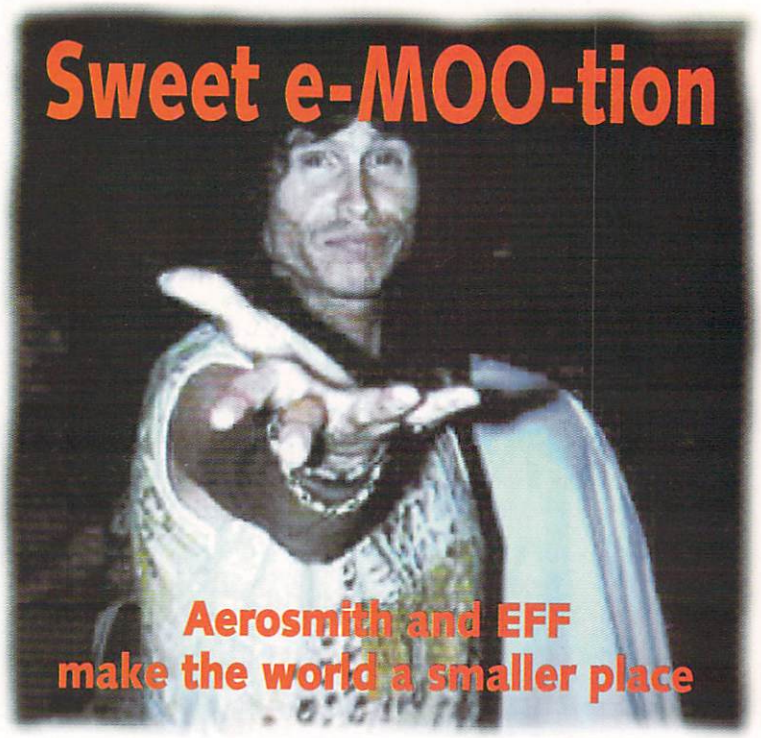
If you haven't checked out Synchronet yet, crank up your modem and download a demo. There isn't a faster, more feature rich BBS available anywhere from anyone. Synchronet combines the robust interactive nature of a multiuser BBS with the speed, power and flexibility of a multinode system.

It was innovative out-of-the-box features such as intelligent variable timeslicing, ARS™ security, RIPscrip, enhanced CD-ROM, and easy to use fully integrated message network support that made Synchronet a multinode powerhouse. And now, with version 2.0, custom programmability, lightning fast high volume messaging, and much more makes Synchronet *the* sysop's choice for BBSing in the 90's.

Synchronet BBS version 2

Multinode Bulletin Board System Software

Sweet e-MOO-tion



Aerosmith and EFF make the world a smaller place

Q: What do you get when you cross a rock band, a civil liberties organization and a collection of electronic services?

A: A new way of having fun, collecting money for a great cause, and, most important, developing bonds between people.

That's exactly what happened right before Christmas, when Aerosmith, one of America's premier rock bands, decided to turn its attention to online communications. And the band's timing couldn't have been better, because the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) was in the process of making organizational changes to reflect a return to its roots — that place they call cyberspace.

In the middle of November, the management company for the rock band Aerosmith contacted EFF with a unique idea — the band wanted to do a "Cyberspace Tour." Unlike other forays into the online world, however, the band did not actually want to perform online. While concert broadcasts are certainly worthwhile, band members Steven Tyler, Joe Perry, Brad Whitford, Tom Hamilton and Joey Kramer wanted to actually connect with their fans, and they realized that only a limited number of folks currently have the capability to receive networked audio-video. Instead, the band wanted to "chat" with the online masses.

The band proposed a four-night tour, from Dec. 4–7, where they would appear on CompuServe, Prodigy, America Online and the Internet. The proposal for EFF was rather interesting: if EFF could help the band arrange the online events in two-and-a-half weeks, the band would donate proceeds of connect time and T-shirt sales to EFF, furthering freedom of speech online. Aerosmith has taken a strong stand for free speech over the years, participating in several lawsuits that tested the limits of intellectual property ownership and censorship.

Coincidentally, when Aerosmith's management approached EFF, the civil liberties group was undergoing some internal refocusing of its mission, and jumped on the opportunity to work with the band on this event. Aside from the publicity for online free speech the band would be sure to generate, folks at EFF saw this event as something more—a chance to sponsor a community event for several communities in

cyberspace.

EFF was founded in July of 1990 as a result of a disturbance in cyberspace: the systematic seizures and raids of several BBSs throughout the country. Over the years, the organization has dedicated itself to working on cases and legislation that made cyberspace a better place to be. But recently, members of the board of directors were growing less and less comfortable with the organization's role as Washington deal-maker and were interested in getting back to a more community-based focus for the organization. The Aerosmith tour was a great chance to help foster a few of cyberspace's communities.

And the event was a whopping success. On December 4, Aerosmith came online for the first time, appearing on CompuServe. That service filled its "auditorium" to capacity, when band members literally dialed in from backstage at the Palace of Auburn Hills in Detroit, where they physically performed to a sell-out crowd less than an hour later. Subsequent events on the following nights on Prodigy and America Online also resulted in the largest crowds those services had ever gathered for a single event.

But the most interesting event was the band's appearance on the Internet.

The band had no idea of the best "place" to appear on the world's largest computer network and had assumed that a channel on IRC, Internet Relay Chat, would be the location of the final event. However, folks at EFF weren't so sure that was the best place for this type of event. IRC is great fun, but the non-hierarchical nature of the medium surely would drown out band members attempting to answer questions. No, IRC probably wasn't best for this type of chat.

Folks at EFF decided to turn, instead, to the MOOs. MOOs are interactive online services, usually game areas, where fantasy worlds are created and traversed through textual commands and descriptions. Why not create a MOO concert hall where the band could appear onstage? A message was posted on one of the MOO organizer lists on the Internet asking if any MOOs were interested in sponsoring such an event. Several MOOs responded, and within days MOO organizers from several of the largest MOOs were working together on programming code that could link them all together. The final Aerosmith "gig" was going to be the largest online gathering ever.

This might not seem like such a big thing for the uninitiated, but the linking of the MOOs was actually an historic event in the life of the Net. Once the software was created for an online gathering of this sort, it was available for other such online gatherings. With those lines of code came a new way of linking the world together.

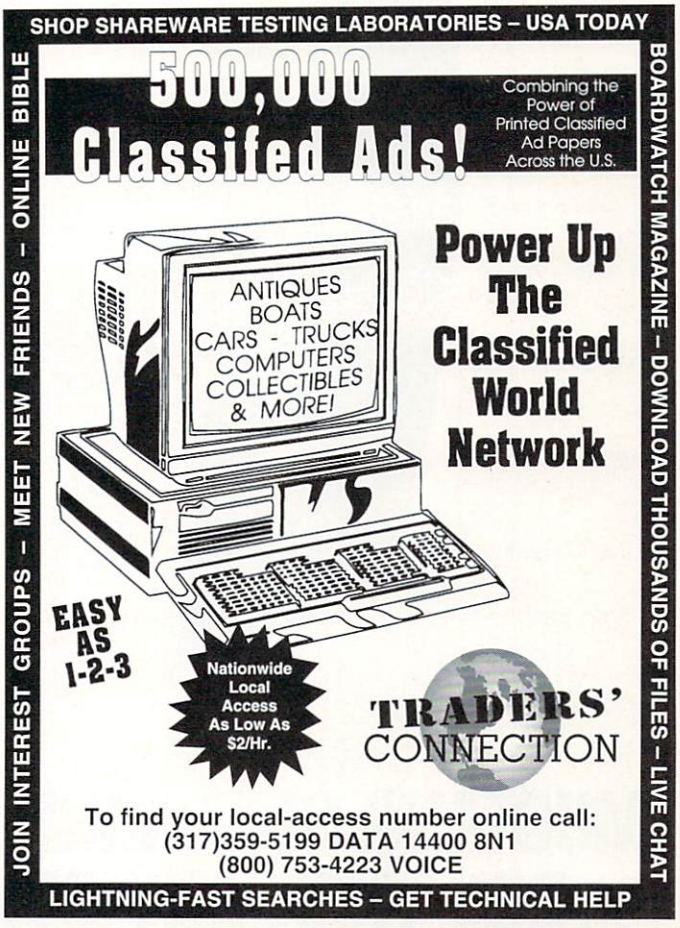
All in all, 14 MOOs from all over the world participated in the Aerosmith event, and several thousand people were online to participate. An IRC channel broadcast the discussion. There were problems and bugs, but things were sorted out as the chat progressed, and everything worked smoothly by the end. EFF is committed to holding other events of this kind, encouraging more and more folks to find their way online.

In the meantime, some big changes have happened at EFF. Andrew Taubman has been named EFF Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer. David Johnson has been named Chair of the EFF Board of Directors and Senior Policy Fellow of EFF. Esther Dyson has been named Vice Chair of the Board.

EFF co-founders Mitchell Kapor and John Perry Barlow remain Directors and will continue to participate actively in the development and implementation of EFF policy programs. Five members of EFF's Washington policy staff, including Policy Director Jerry Berman, have left EFF and have created a new organization called the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT).

In 1995, EFF will continue to pursue its policy mission of protecting the health and growth of the global computer networks. The 1995 policy agenda includes such projects as an innovative new "State of the Net" report; studies of the implications of the global nature of the Net for jurisdictional governance questions; a study of the protection of intellectual property on networks; and, efforts to preserve the free flow of information across the Global Information Infrastructure (GII). EFF expects to continue to intervene actively to counter threats to computer-mediated communications networks, and virtual communities, such as limitations on the use of cryptography and intrusions into personal privacy, as it has in previous years.

Shari Steele is Director of Legal Services of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF). Send legal questions to ssteele@eff.org, or c/o BBS Magazine.



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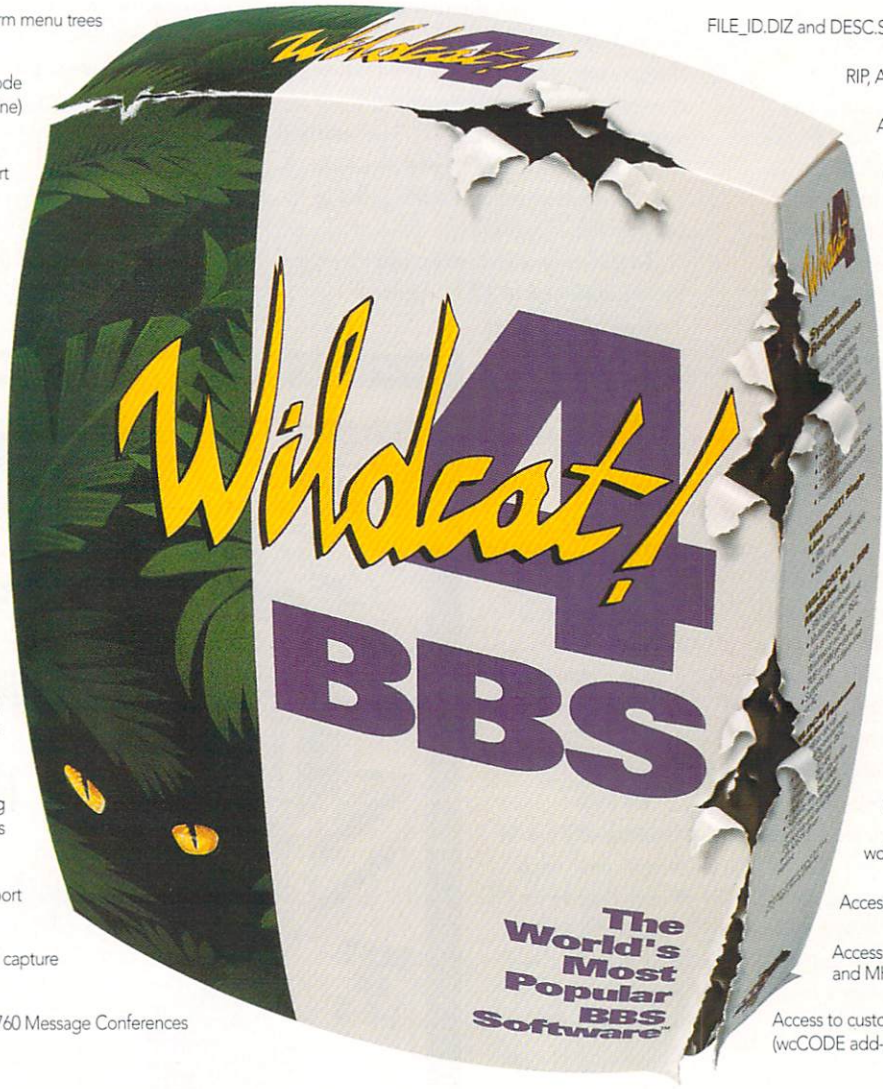

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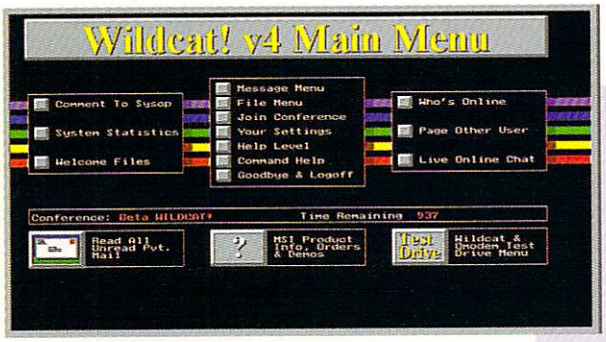

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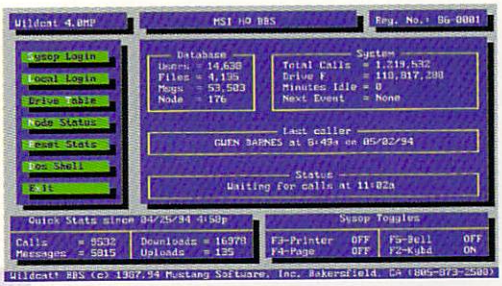

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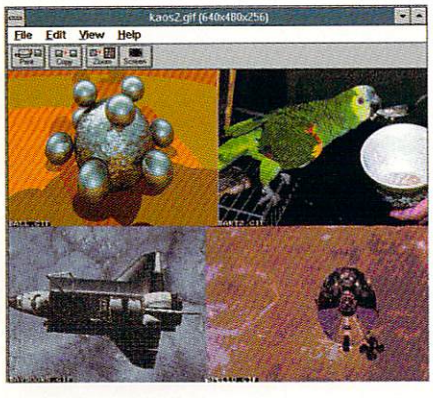

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EveryBaudy's BBS

Manchester, New Hampshire

Home Again BBS

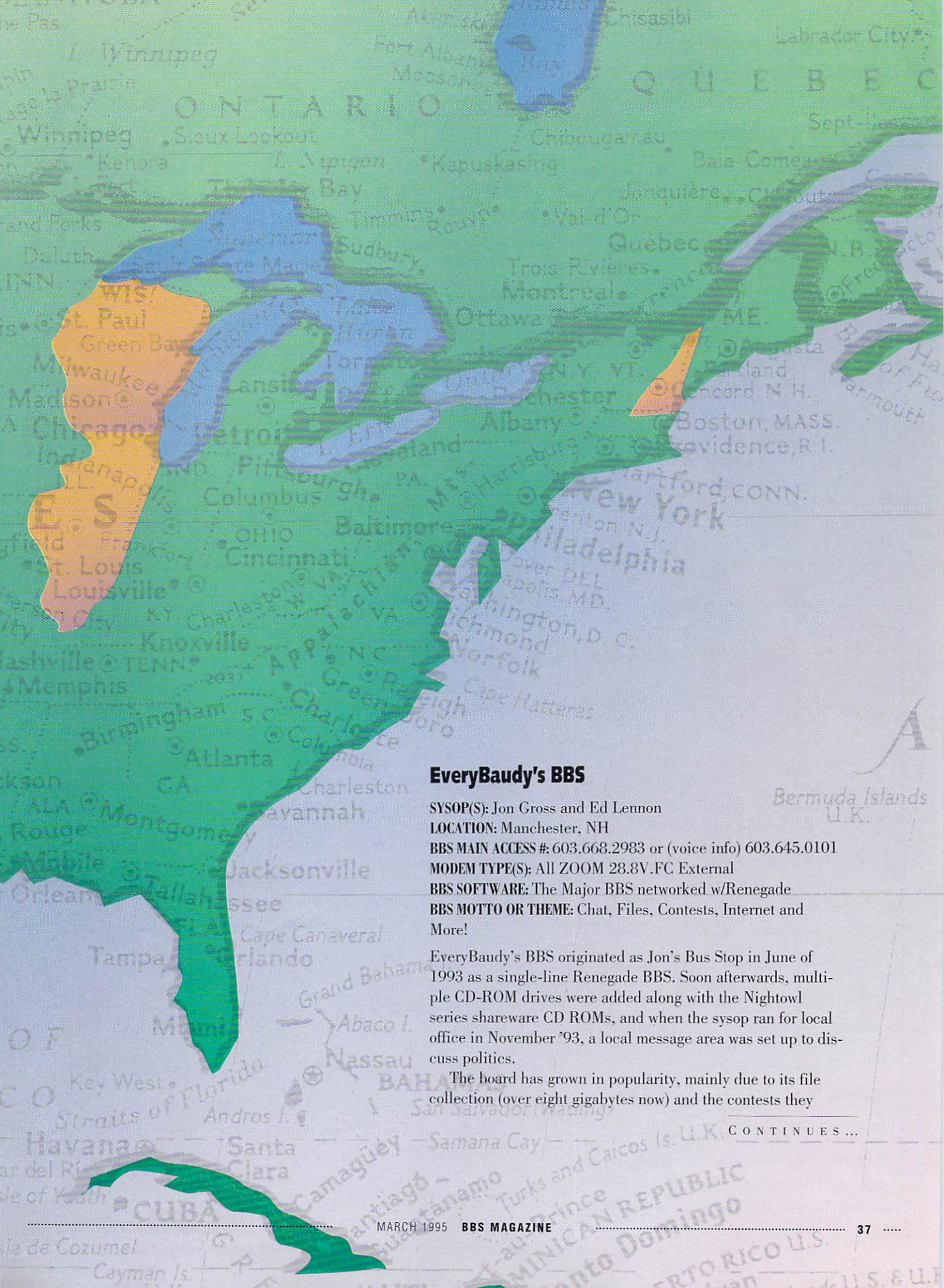
Chicago, Illinois

Hotel California BBS

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The State Patrol

Appleton, Wisconsin



EveryBaudy's BBS

SYSOP(S): Jon Gross and Ed Lennon
LOCATION: Manchester, NH
BBS MAIN ACCESS #: 603.668.2983 or (voice info) 603.645.0101
MODEM TYPE(S): All ZOOM 28.8V.FC External
BBS SOFTWARE: The Major BBS networked w/Renegade
BBS MOTTO OR THEME: Chat, Files, Contests, Internet and More!

EveryBaudy's BBS originated as Jon's Bus Stop in June of 1993 as a single-line Renegade BBS. Soon afterwards, multiple CD-ROM drives were added along with the Nightowl series shareware CD ROMs, and when the sysop ran for local office in November '93, a local message area was set up to discuss politics.

The board has grown in popularity, mainly due to its file collection (over eight gigabytes now) and the contests they

CONTINUES...

The added ability of a local BBS to offer access to the Internet and live chat makes it feasible to achieve a market-share against the 'big' national services.

run. They were running Richard Paquette's FACTS Door this month, for instance, and offering prizes to the winners—some of which have included movie tickets and restaurant gift certificates.

The extremely helpful sysop, Jon Gross, also founded Rebelnet in 1993, with four other local boards. Node quickly went online, and shortly after that Jon added Internet UUCP and Usenet email services for his users. The board was still completely free, with increased access given for $10 and $25 annual contributions.

"We were averaging about 70 calls a day, with70 percent busy time, so we needed to expand," Jon said.

So The Major BBS was added as a new platform and EveryBaudy's BBS was born. The upgrade included seven lines—all at 28,800 baud (with a license for 14 lines and hardware ready for 16). Many games and additional modules were purchased, Jon said. Currently 10 CD-ROMs are online and live Internet will be available this month.

Worldlink Live Chat is on nightly and most of the time during the weekends. In its first week of operation, the new board averaged over 120 calls a day.

"I want to provide an inexpensive alternative to the Big Three—AOL, Prodigy and Compuserve—where people can have live chat, interactive games, live Internet and tons of files for as little as 50 cents an hour, and not have to drag along at 2400 or 9600 or even 14.4K," Jon said when asked why he runs a BBS.

"I love creating a social world where we can have fun, organizing contests within our own electronic universe, with the feeling of home to our users."

The equipment on Jon's board includes two computers (the main one is a 486/66 with 16MB of RAM), a one-gigabyte IDE hard drive, SCSI controller with seven CD-ROMs, and a 16-Port BocaBoard (with 16 16550 UARTS). All modems are ZOOM V.FC 28.8K.

The second computer is a 486/33 EISA with 8MB of RAM and a 540MB SCSI-2 (Fast SCSI) hard drive, a DTC 3290 SCSI controller (with 2MB of cache installed on the controller), and three SCSI CD-ROMs. A third system is poised and ready to go on line as an Internet Server.

The mail networks carried at EveryBaudy's BBS are ITC, SING, Rebelnet, Usenet (Internet UUCP), and Worldlink.

Playing Door games seems to be a growing American pastime. Of the many great Doors Jon has online, the most popular are SLOTS, TEOS, LORD, SCRAMBLE, and FACTS.

Jon's board is family-oriented, with no adult file areas. However some adult "talk" areas are online.

In the future, Jon said he plans to "develop Internet further and add X.25 lines so people all over the country can reach us with a local call."

"I think the opportunity for a well-run BBS to prosper by catering to regional users is great. The added ability of a local BBS to offer access to the Internet and live chat makes it feasible to achieve a market-share against the 'big' national services," he said. "In addition, the ability to move more quickly onto cutting edge advances, like providing 28,800 baud connect lines, can keep the local BBS ahead of the national systems. Local shopping services and a local feel add to the nice atmosphere of local boards."

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Hotel California BBS

SYSOP: Lloyd Lawson
LOCATION: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
BBS MAIN ACCESS #: 405.728.7124
MODEM TYPE: USRobotics Sportster 28.800 V.34
BBS SOFTWARE: Wildcat! 4.1 Single Line
BBS MOTTO OR THEME: *A regular cornucopia of modeming fun and excitement!*

After previously running a BBS for over a year, Lloyd Lawson knew about the hours required to run a BBS, not to

mention the expense of it all. So with experience as his guide and an old 386 computer, Lloyd Lawson jumped back into the BBS world by putting the Hotel California BBS online.

This was in May of '94. Today Lloyd says he has already taken 2,500 calls.

I asked Lloyd why he runs a BBS, to which he replied "I have a serious God complex. This is my only outlet for such a problem. But seriously, it has to be the thrill of knowing that someone is interested enough to take time out of their day to call my board to see what I have to offer, then seeing the same people call back day after day."

The one-gigabyte hard drive is packed with plenty of current shareware and there are two CD-ROM drives with Pier 4 and Software Vault Ruby which gives you a little over 8,000 files to browse through.

As for software, "After trying several BBS programs, I kept coming back to Wildcat! for its ease of use, simple set-up and unmatched customer support," he said.

Customer support, indeed. Lloyd told me that Paul Davis, the main Wildcat! programmer, personally helped him out with a bug fix and Rick Heming, vice-president of Mustang Software, called him at home to be sure he was happy and that everything was working properly.

The board is run on a full tower 486 DX2-66 with 8MB of RAM, a one-gigabyte hard drive, two CD-ROM drives, a USR 28.8 V.34 modem, and a Jumbo Trakker tape drive for backups.

"I run my BBS under Windows for Workgroups," Lloyd said, assuring that it works quite well—perfect for his needs. Running the BBS this way allows him to operate other programs

After trying several BBS programs, I kept coming back to Wildcat! for its ease of use, simple set-up and unmatched customer support

while leaving his BBS online.

The Hotel California BBS currently carries the SEEKNET message echo. SEEKNET is a QWK-based message network which carries over 50 topic areas.

Lloyd says all of his Doors are quite popular. Some of the favorites are Dollarmania, a slot machine game, Lasso!, the classic hangman game, word Scramble, Saratoga Race Track, King of the Board, and Online Trivia. They also offer the Online Bible and the CDSub BBS Magazine doors.

The board is also the new home of the SOONER BBS list which offers callers and sysops an up-to-date list of BBSs in the 405 area code—two-thirds of Oklahoma.

Hotel California caters to a wide range of callers from age 13 and up. All ages are welcome, and, Lloyd says, "There are no adult areas, so parents do not have to worry about what their children are seeing on my board."

As for the future, Lloyd said "I will definitely add one more CD-ROM drive, bringing the total to three. I would also like to offer Internet mail and newsgroups. As technology expands, so will Hotel California BBS."

Lloyd says nothing irritates him more than seeing on TV and reading in magazines what he calls "BBS slamming."

"It is obvious that some of these people are narrow-minded in thinking that BBSers are all perverts with nothing better to do with their time than to look at dirty pictures on their computers," he said. "This is definitely not the truth. Granted, there are many BBSs that offer adult material, but the majority of the BBSs in my area don't. I feel that more positive advertising by the sysops and strong support from user groups could bring about a better public opinion of BBSs now and in the future."

Home Again BBS

SYSOP: William Johnson
LOCATION: Chicago, Illinois
BBS MAIN ACCESS #: 312.665.7319
MODEM TYPE: US Robotics Sportster 28.8k internal
BBS SOFTWARE: PCBoard v15.2
BBS MOTTO OR THEME: *Free non-commercial access to Internet email and Usenet newsgroups.*

William Johnson put his BBS online in September of 1993 with GT Power BBS. And after a mail feed was established with a BBS in a nearby town, the Home Again BBS started taking calls.

William told me he quickly became interested in the Internet and set up Waffle to send and receive Internet email and Usenet newsgroups using Russell Kroll's (Computech BBS) WAFTOGT utility to gate mail between Waffle and GT. But WAFTOGT was only capable of gating a maximum of 50 Usenet newsgroups, forcing William to

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Over 130 different conferences!!!
Large free Classifieds section.

Home Again is provided for the enjoyment of its callers. If you are concerned about not getting ripped off, not being taken advantage of, then Home Again is the place to call.

seek other available software packages that could possibly meet his needs.

"When PCBoard v15.2 became available with UUCP built-in, I was able to recover over 100MB of hard drive space by removing the Waffle system, WAFTOGT, and GT," he said. "My Waffle scripts and system files were practically drop-ins for PCBoard UUCP!"

The board now averages anywhere between 24 and 32 calls per day on a single node, and has already logged over 1,000 calls since changing to PCBoard last November.

Now, according to William, "it's time for node two to go online."

"I find it amazing to be able to exchange Internet email with BBS users in Sweden and Italy, and sometimes getting a response the same day I entered the message. I use the BBS more than the callers do," William said.

"If a caller can log onto the system and find what they are looking for, then great!" he continued. "A new caller left a message to me saying he needed a utility to convert graphic images in order to complete a task at his work. He was surprised to be able to download what he needed during his first call."

When you log on to Home Again you truly do feel right at home—especially if you're looking for files. William maintains a terrific file selection between the files on drives and the assortment of available CD-ROMs. Some of the CDs online when I called were the Nightowl's 10, 11, 12, 13, and the Pier 5 CD.

You'll also find a great selection of Door games here, including Legend of the Red Dragon, The PIT, VGA Planets, ChessMagic, and SuperSlots. The US BBS List Door was also available to users.

William runs his BBS on an AST mini-tower i486DX/33 with 8MB of RAM, a USR Sportster 28.8k internal FAX V.34 w/V.FC and a Pioneer DRM-604X CD-ROM changer. Johnson runs, and endorses highly, PC Board software for its long list of built-in features. To him, the built-in UUCP support and the built-in Fido support were very important and necessary.

"Home Again (as the name implies) is provided for the enjoyment of its callers. If you are concerned about not getting ripped off, not being taken advantage of, then Home Again is the place to call," he said. "You will find no pornography, copyrighted material, hacked or otherwise illegally obtained material. If you are looking for that, then I would prefer that you would call elsewhere."

William said he recently acquired a ZEOS Pantera 90 MHz Pentium with 24MB of RAM that will be used as the file-server for a new LAN-based system that the BBS will operate on.

In the future, William says, "Additional lines will be installed, and callers will be able to participate in multi-line Door games and online chat.

The State Patrol

SYSOP: Micky Pagel
LOCATION: Appleton, WI
BBS MAIN ACCESS #: 414.830.1885
MODEM TYPE: Zoom 28,800
BBS SOFTWARE: Renegade
BBS MOTTO OR THEME: *Do Your Best!*

There's a very popular BBS out in Appleton, Wisconsin, that went online in September of '94 called the State Patrol. Its sysop is 14-year-old Micky Pagel (known as State Trooper to board members).

Micky said she runs a BBS because she likes giving other people the enjoyment of having a local BBS that they can call their home board.

She also enjoys the interactivity she has with the callers.

Micky's modestly sized BBS gives a user plenty of things to do while online, and if you like downloading and checking out new files, then you can browse through the CD-ROMs that are online, in addition to the new uploads that are kept on the hard drive. Some of the CDs we saw were Games to Treasure 1 and 2, and the Pier 5 Shareware CD.

The Door games online at the State Patrol are very popular with callers, and each is heavily played. The most popular include the Legend of the Red Dragon and Barren realms Elite, followed by Motor City Drag Strip and the ever-popular Tractor Pull.

A built-in feature with the Renegade software Micky runs is the voting booth she uses to ask her callers what they want to see on the board. Micky then tries to tailor the board to be what the users want. She asks them what Doors they want to play, what types of files they want posted and what kinds of message bases they want to post messages in.

Micky chose the Renegade software package because she says it was very easy to set up and is extremely flexible, giving her the ability to make it look and feel the way she and her users want. It is also a very popular package among sysops in area—so there's plenty of support.

The State Patrol is run on an Acer Acros 486/SX-25 computer with a 318MB hard drive with 4MB of RAM, an SVGA monitor, a CD-ROM drive, and a Zoom 28.8K modem.

The E-Mail Networks carried at the State Patrol are also very popular in the area. She carries RTS Net, RGS Net, ITC Net and another message network started by Micky and a friend called Dragon Net, which is quickly becoming very popular.

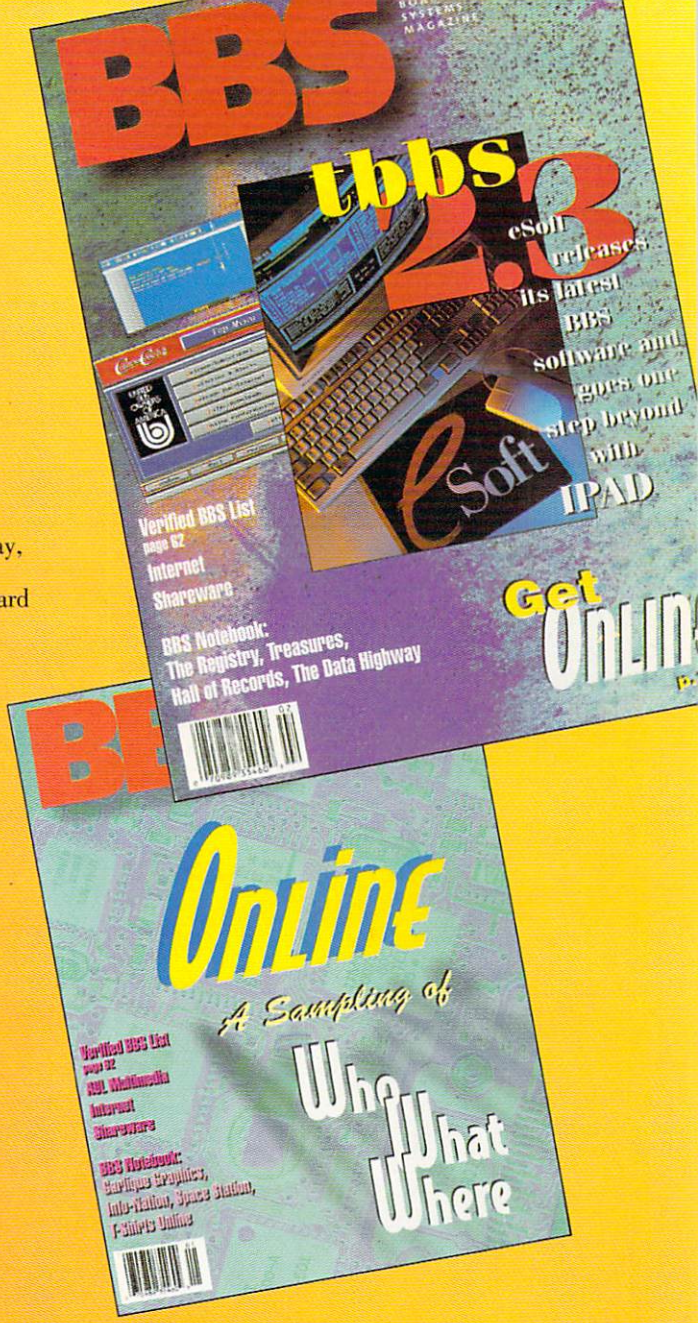
Future plans for the State Patrol include setting up another node, adding more CD-ROM drives and having more shareware CDs online, and maybe bringing in a few more message nets like Fidonet and getting linked to the Internet.

Micky told me she feels a sysop should be nice, as well as flexible.

"Most of all, be careful of who you lock out on your system," she said. "Get caller-ID if it's available in your area." Sounds like good advice to me.

We found the State Patrol to be a very friendly, easy-going BBS to visit. And although the user base seemed to be made up of a younger crowd, the BBS was set up to give users of all ages plenty of things to do online.

BBS Magazine



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BY MIKE ROBINSON

The Best of the Web

And the winners are...

Time and again I'm asked the same question by readers and colleagues. Where are the best Web sites?

The answer to that question depends on the interests of the one doing the asking. And since I don't know the personal likes and dislikes of everyone asking the question, I point them to the Best of the Web Awards.

Winners of the Best of the Web '94, or BOW awards, are undoubtedly some of the finest sites around. However, by the time you read this who knows what else might have emerged. For now, the Best can be found at http://wings.buffalo.edu/contest.

These awards are given in 13 different categories and are selected by a majority vote of over 5,000 respondents. The contest was run by Brandon Plewe, assistance coordinator of the Campus-Wide Information System at SUNY-Buffalo. And plans are already in the works for a BOW '95.

Following is a list of the winners in each category. Go to the BOW '94 page to get the actual URL for each page.

BEST OVERALL SITE
National Center for Supercomputing Archive

WWW HALL-OF-FAME
Tim Berners-Lee (CERN)

CAMPUS-WIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM
Globewide Network Academy

COMMERCIAL
O'Reilly & Associates

ENTERTAINMENT
Sports Information Service (MIT)

EDUCATIONAL
Introduction to Object Oriented Programming Using C++

PROFESSIONAL
OncoLink (University of Pennsylvania)

NAVIGATION AIDE
World-Wide-Web-Worm (U. Colorado)

SERVICE CONCEPT
What's New on the WWW (NCSA)

DOCUMENT DESIGN
Travels with Samantha (MIT)

INTERACTION
Map Server (Xerox PARC)

MULTIPLE MEDIA
LeLouvre (Telecom Paris)

TECHNICAL MERIT
Map Server (Xerox PARC)

We're not in Kansas anymore

Playing around with the Map Server (BOW's pick for technical merit) located at Xerox PARC (http://pubweb.parc.xerox.com/map), left me truly impressed.

This was my experience: Once at the server, a map of the world appeared. I asked for USA-specific locations to get more detail, and then requested a color map. Next came the hard part — where to go? First I found the geographic location for my search. I chose a small town in the woods of Wisconsin called Merrimac (you know, the one with a cable channel displaying pictures of cows in a field). I'd been there once and can report that it's as small as it sounds.

Merrimac (pop. 365) is located at latitude 43.22.24 north, longitude 89.37.24 west, according to the Geographic Name Server.

The next step was to enter the location into the Map Server. This was done by entering the string "/lat=43.22/lon=-89.37" into the entry box at the bottom of the screen. One hint at this point: Make sure you have your inline image display turned on — mine was off for a frustrating few minutes on my first trip here, allowing me no maps. Turning the inline image display on, I saw Merrimac, WI, right in the center of the screen. I could also see Lake Wisconsin and the major highways nearby. Finally, I located Philadelphia, PA — my home — only to find there was simply too much detail, and had to turn off the major highways selection. One final note: there is no labeling of towns, roads, rivers, etc., so you likely won't be able to use these maps for travel.

FTP by email

The number of people with simple email access probably far outnumbers that of people with FTP. This has undoubtedly made for a lot of frustrated would-be downloaders.

Hate to break it to you emailers, but for some time there's been a solution to this dilemma. It goes like this: Send a message to mail-server@rtfm.mit.edu without a subject. In the body of your letter, put the following line:

send usenet/news.answers/ftp-list/faq

This will send you some help on how to use the service, where to get more information, etc. I'm assuming here you already know where you want to FTP. If not, there's information on how to get listings using the above information.

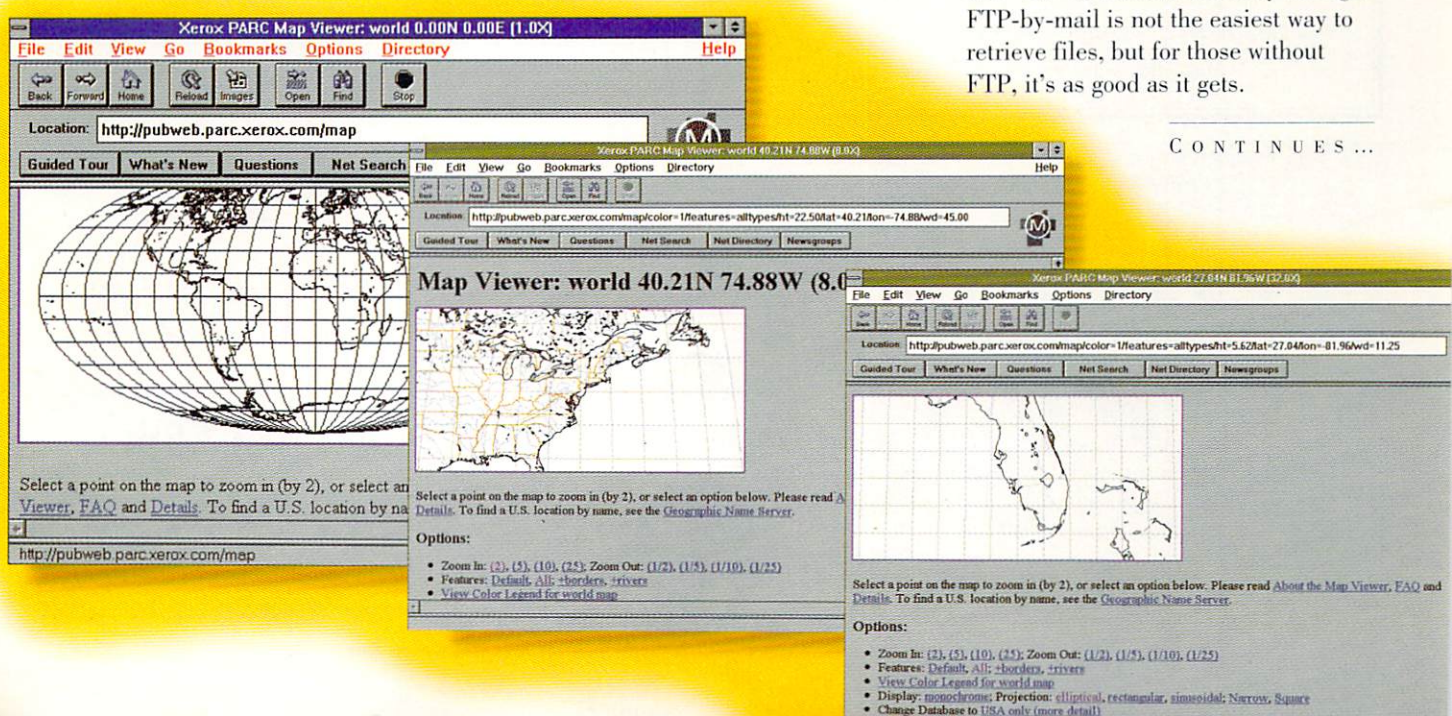
The next step is to send mail to a local FTP-by-mail server such as Princeton University's in New Jersey (bitftp@pucc.princeton.edu).

Again, don't include a subject — all of your instructions will be contained in the body of the message. For example, to download the current release of Trumpet Winsock (2.0b), include the following text as the body:

```
open oak.oakland.edu
cd /pub/win3/winsock
bin
get twsk20b.zip
quit
```

You can also include commands like "dir" to retrieve directory listings. FTP-by-mail is not the easiest way to retrieve files, but for those without FTP, it's as good as it gets.

CONTINUES ...



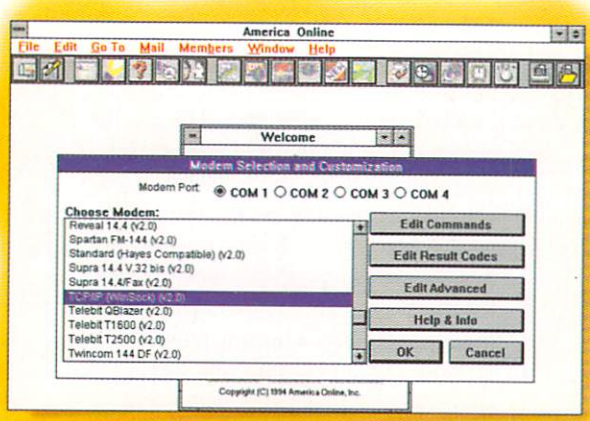
There are a few more things to keep in mind: first, don't expect your file back immediately — it may take several days, depending on how busy the mail server and FTP site are. Second, large files will probably be split into several smaller pieces which you will need to combine to get the original file. Third, binary files will be uuencoded, so you will have to uudecode the message after you download it from the BBS.

If you don't have a copy of uudecode, try the following script:

```
open oak.oakland.edu
cd /pub/msdos/starter
bin
get uudecode.com
get uuencode.com
quit
```

Hot tip

Are you a frequent user of America Online or any other service offering TCP/IP as well as modem access? Do you also have a SLIP or PPP account?



If so, dial your SLIP/PPP account and then connect to the service through your client using TCP/IP services (Winsock). This will give you 19.2K, 28.8K, or even higher access speeds.

For example, I dial into my office (which is live to the Net) at speeds up to 38.4K, get a PPP account and then use that to connect to AOL at much faster than my local 9600 Sprint connection. And I can use Mosaic, as well as log in to check my mail — all at the same time.

I wouldn't recommend this if you use an Internet provider, however, since the additional online charges will probably accumulate and cost you big bucks. But a lot of you have free SLIP/PPP accounts — sometimes without even knowing (students) — so here's another way to take advantage of them.

Nexicon

DNS — Domain Name System. This is probably the most useful service on the Internet, although most users don't even knows it's there. DNS is an online database used to translate human-readable names into their numerical IP addresses. IP messages are addresses using a dotted-quad notation (i.e., 165.123.8.41) which is not easy for us to remember. So DNS takes a machine name (finance.wharton.upenn.edu) and automatically translates it into the appropriate IP address.

Mike Robinson
mrobinsn@wharton.upenn.edu
(or on the Web at http://finance.wharton.upenn.edu/~mrobiisn.)

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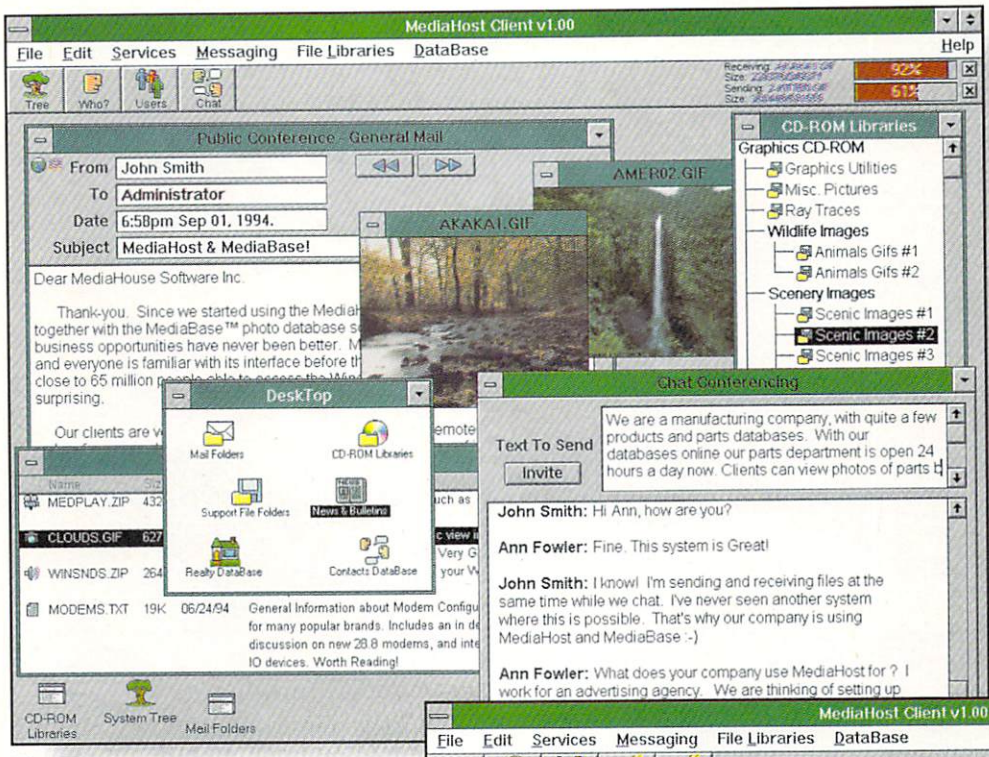

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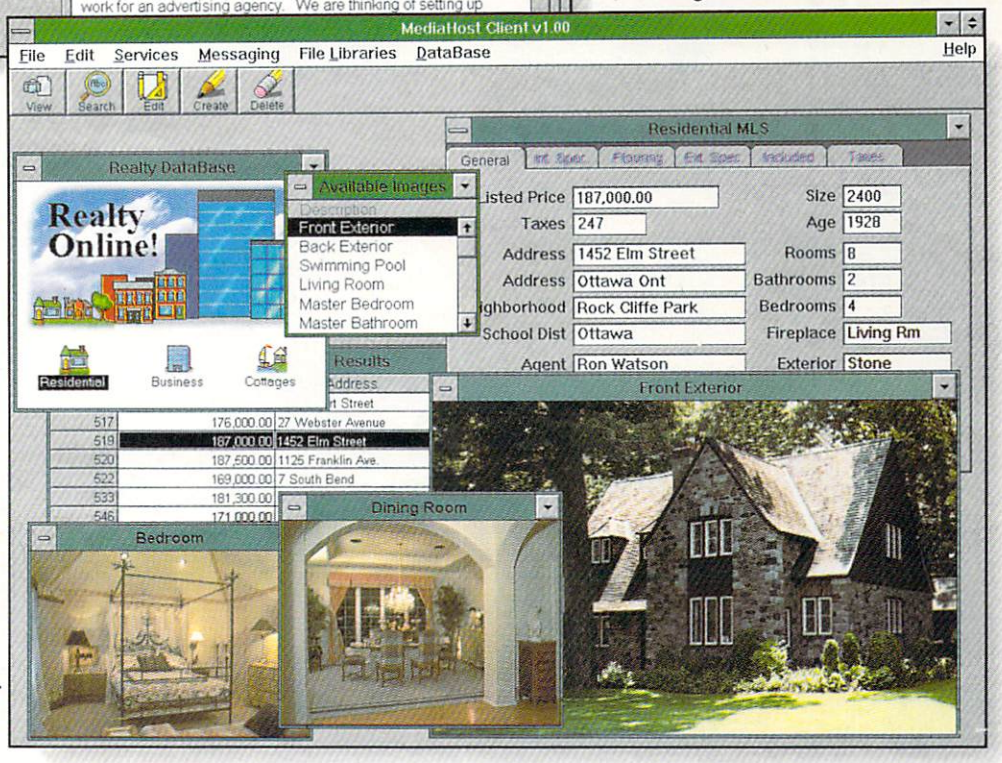

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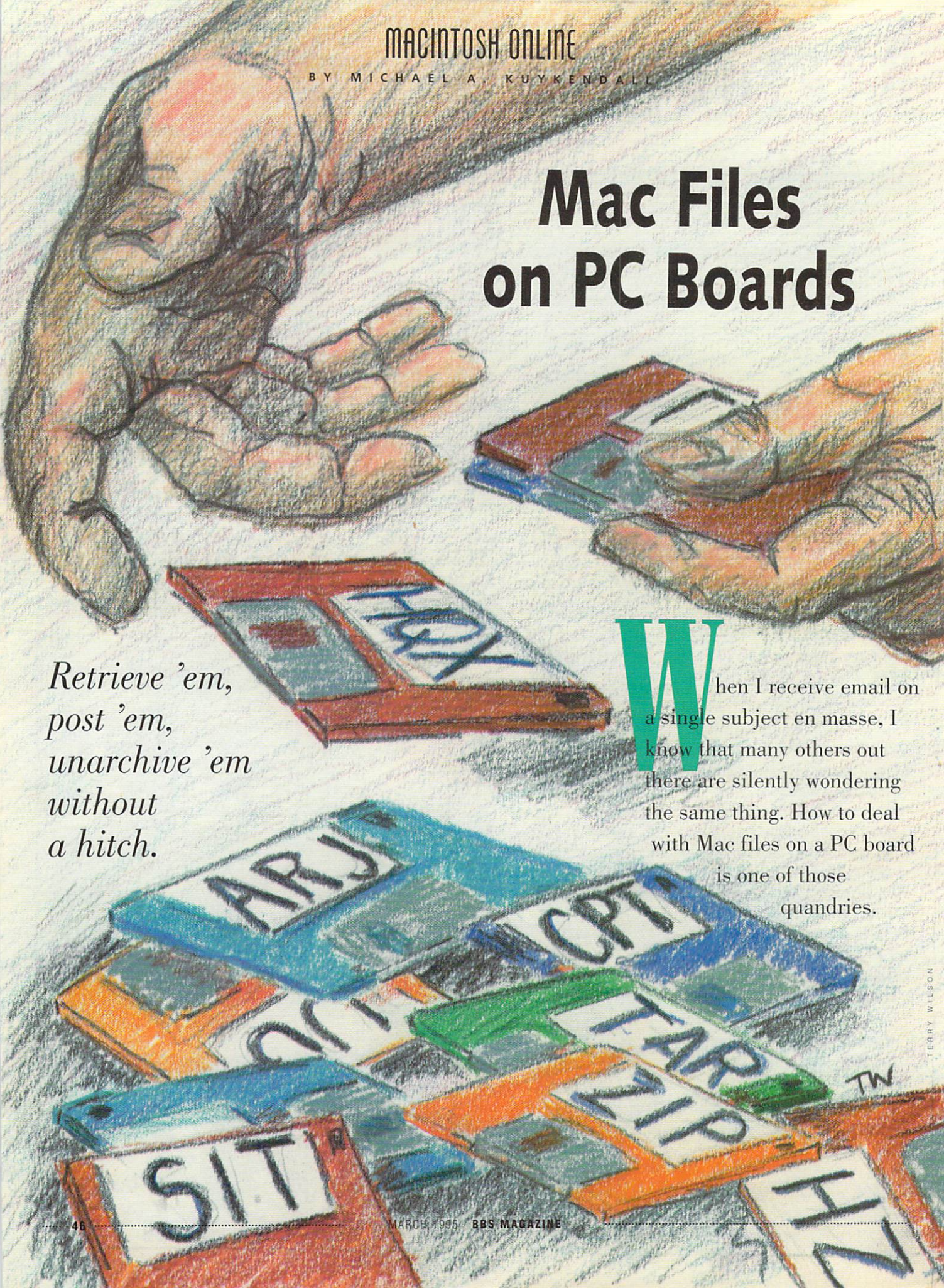
BY MICHAEL A. KUYKENDALL

Mac Files on PC Boards

Retrieve 'em, post 'em, unarchive 'em without a hitch.

When I receive email on a single subject en masse, I know that many others out there are silently wondering the same thing. How to deal with Mac files on a PC board is one of those quandries.



TERRY WILSON

I get a lot of mail from PC sysops wanting to know the best way to provide Mac files for Macintosh callers. Because the problem often lies in making the files readable, my suggestion is to simply convert them to a MacBinary format file before transferring.

Although there is a public domain program that converts to and from MacBinary (which is called, coincidentally, MacBinary), most telecommunication programs provide MacBinary conversion.

ZTerm, for example, can be configured to detect a MacBinary file when it is received and automatically convert the file to its original representation.

I discussed this with Henry, a friend of mine who runs Lone Star Mac Online, a First Class BBS.

Henry explained that you really don't have to worry about pre-converting files with a utility like MacBinary before uploading a file to a PC board. As long as the file is uploaded as MacBinary, it can be downloaded as a Mac file (the MacBinary header info remains with the file). It's that simple. Otherwise, if it's uploaded as a simple binary file, it may not be usable when downloaded unless you run a utility like MacBinary to intrepret the header info on the file (determining where the data and resource forks begin and end). But even then, I've encountered files that I couldn't restore.

PC downloads

I've also had many newer Mac users ask me how to open files they've pulled from a PC-based BBS — files that were compressed or archived in some manner. This calls for a primer on file formats, and what utilities translate them.

When you log onto a PC board, many of the files can be easily dealt with, such as text files, GIFs, TIFFs, EPS images, even TrueType fonts. However, you will encounter many files that have been compressed by a PC archiving utility. Below are some of the more common archives you'll find, with the suffix of the file, a description, and a Mac utility you can use to unarchive the files.

File suffix	Type of archive/file	Mac utility(s) to use
.arc	MS-DOS PC archive	ArcPop, MacArc
.arj	MS-DOS PC archive	unArjMac
.lzh	Amiga or old MS-DOS PC archive	LHarc, MacLHa
.zip	MS-DOS PC archive	UnZip, ZipPop, ZipIt

Occasionally you'll also come across files from a UNIX system. Below are some of the files you'll encounter and utilities to use with them.

File suffix	Type of archive/file	Mac utility(s) to Use
.shar	UNIX shell archive	Unshar 1.5
.uu	UNIX uuencoded files	UUlite
.Z	UNIX 'compress' archive	MacCompress 3.2
.tar	UNIX tape backup archive	SunTar

These are the ones most prevalent on Mac boards, online services and the Internet, but they are not the only utilities that translate these file types. StuffIt Deluxe 3.0, for example, includes translators for .tar, .uu, MacBinary, DiskDoubler, and UNIX compress. These translators can also be used with StuffIt Lite. In addition, .arc and .zip translators are distributed with StuffIt Deluxe.

Mac archives

As for Macintosh compressed archive files, there are several different popular utilities and file formats used online. Some of these include:

File suffix	Type of archive/file	Mac Utility(s) to Use
.bin	MacBinary files	MacBinary, BinHex, StuffIt Deluxe 3.0, SunTar
.cpt	Compact Pro archive	Compact Pro, StuffIt Deluxe 3.0
.sit	StuffIt archive	StuffIt Deluxe 3.0, StuffIt Lite, Compact Pro, Disk Doubler
.dd	DiskDoubler archive	DiskDoubler, DD Expand, StuffIt Deluxe 3.0
.hqx	BinHex files	BinHex, Compact Pro, StuffIt Deluxe 3.0, SunTar
.image	Apple DiskCopy disk image file	Apple DiskCopy, DiskDup+
.pit	PackIt files	PackIt, StuffIt Deluxe 3.0, SunTar, DiskDoubler
.sea	Self-extracting archive files	double-click to decompress

Another utility, StuffIt Expander 3.0.7, can decode BinHex, StuffIt, Compact Pro, and Applelink archives. What's really nice about Expander is that it supports drag-and-drop under System 7. StuffIt Expander is distributed free by Aladdin Systems Inc.

Notes on utilities

- PackIt files were the standard before StuffIt burst on the scene. If it's a PackIt file, odds are, it's very old.
- In order to expand DiskDoubler archives, StuffIt uses inter-application communication and requires DiskDoubler to be installed, which might seem to defeat the purpose.
- DiskDup+ can mount .image files on your desktop, so you can run installers without having to create install disks first. I believe you're only limited by available RAM.

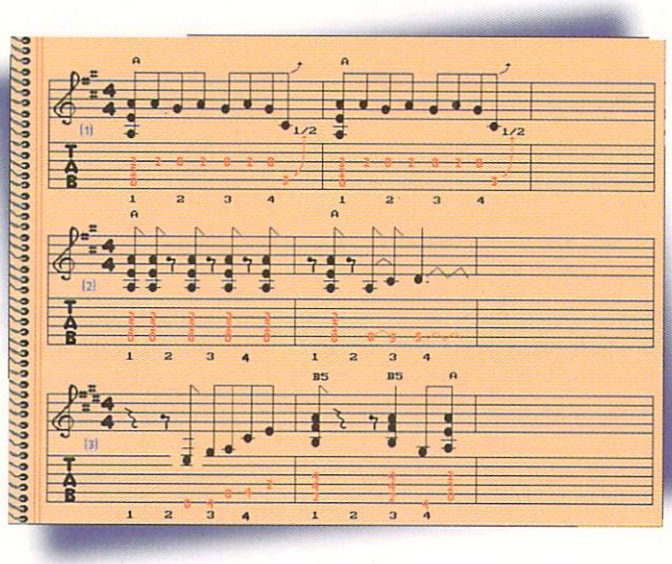
Over the past few years, utility authors have included more cross-platform conversion tools, making life easier for many of us — because, unfortunately, not all BBSers are enlightened enough to have a Mac (grin). And it's likely that more sophisticated tools will soon become available. I'll be sure and report on them as they appear.

If you have any comments or questions, don't be shy about asking. I'll take up the broader issues here; otherwise check your email box for a personal reply.

Michael A. Kuykendall has written for several computer publications and is currently president/sysop/general flunky for the Online Macintosh Users Group BBS in Atlanta (404.988.9904). Comments or suggestions may be sent in care of BBS Magazine, to the BBS via the sysop or to andykirk@aol.com.

Pluck the Keyboard, Be a Star

Basement to Stage shows the way (sort of). Plus: Mah Jongg, Mars and a BBS number finder.



BASEMENT TO STAGE

ROCKGUTR.ZIP
by Ronald Price

Have you ever wanted to learn to play the guitar? If you're looking for a place to start, try this program.

"Basement to Stage" will take you through the steps of buying the right instrument, along with an appropriate amplifier. Author Ronald Price says players can go "from basement to stage in 365 days!" (hence the name). I'm not too sure about that, but by following the procedures outlined in this program, you should at least be able to keep up with your friends.

Basement to Stage (BTS) stresses basics and lots of practice. The author believes that too many aspiring guitarists "spend too much time in the basement impressing themselves with speed and flash" and "fail to learn scales and to use a metronome."

BTS is a menu-driven tutorial that can be used at your own pace. The menu is split into several parts with chapters delving into such things as parts of a guitar, setting goals, getting in a band, rock chords, and scales. There are even a few pages of sheet music to try out.

Nice graphics pop up throughout the program and no sound card is required.

So if you want to jam or strum, give this one a try.

The registration fee of $14.95 gets you a metronome, guitar tuner and 25 more pages of music.

LOCALBBS V1.3

LCLBBS13.ZIP
by J. A. Marrero

There are several BBS lists floating around out there. Some are quite extensive, listing thousands of BBSs around the country and the world. But what if you just want the local boards? Try a program called LOCALBBS by J. A. Marrero.

To use the program, all you need to do is create a text file listing your area code and all the exchanges local to you. Then simply run the program from the command line.

For example, type: LOCALBBS "file name," where "file name" (minus the quotes) is the name of the file you want to check. That's it.

If you wanted to check the USBBS list edited by Bob Breedlove (USBBS###.ZIP) you would use the command: LOCALBBS USBBS217.LST.

Next a listing of BBSs is produced that match the area code and exchanges you signified in the LOCALBBS.XCH file. A file is then written to your disk with an .LOC extension.

There are also a few switches you can use to perform many kinds of searches, such as for area code only, string or a single word.

The author asks for a $5 donation.

MAH JONGG V4.0

MAJONG40.ZIP
by Nels Anderson

Let me admit it, I am not a fervent game player. While I do entertain some of the more popular titles, as veteran readers of this column know, a decent game of solitaire now and then is good enough for me.

And one of the finest solitaire games you'll find is a Chinese tile game by Nels Anderson called Mah Jongg.

Playing the game is quite simple. You start with a layout of 144 colorful tiles, and your objective is to remove them by pairs until you're left with an empty screen. Sounds simple, right? It isn't.

The tiles are stacked up to five high when you begin; therefore, some are covered. You proceed to remove pairs that are not blocked or covered by another tile.

The graphics in this game are some of the best to be found anywhere, especially with the fine details of the tiles. And the general quality of Mah Jongg really impressed me.

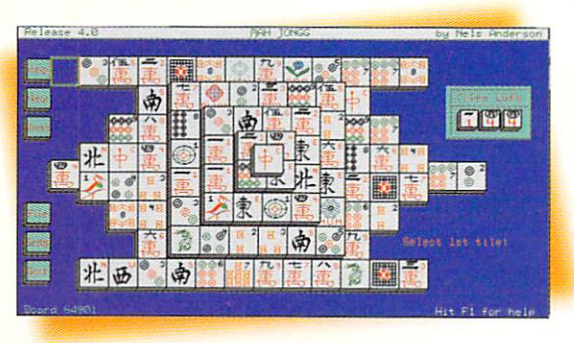
To play, you can use either the keyboard or a mouse (the keyboard works fine, but to get the most out of the game you'll want to use a mouse).

One of the unique features of this package is the inclusion of a tile editor. With this separate program, you can create your own tile sets. It can be time consuming, but the editor is pretty easy to use and produces some very nice graphics. Hundreds of "homemade" sets can be found on most BBSs and online services.

Another interesting feature added to version 4.0 is the ability to archive your tile sets. This can save considerable disk space if you like to collect different sets. All you have to do is ZIP the tile sets with the same name as the original, then delete the file with the .TIL extension. When you choose a set within the game, it will unzip and be ready for use. Trust me, it works quite well.

Mr. Anderson's Mah Jongg has been a favorite for years. And his latest versions include some alternate board layouts. If you've played it in the past, try it again. If you haven't seen it before, it's worth downloading. Keep in mind though, this is another game I'd have to put on the "addicting" list.

Registration for Mah Jongg is $15, which gets you more tiles and board layouts.



MARSPAL

MARSDEMO.ZIP
by Mark Feldman

You may recall a short review I wrote recently on a program called MARS. With it you could "explore" a Martian landscape. It was a neat little program, but it only came in red (naturally). No more.

Mark Feldman took that program and added the ability to change colors.

To use MARSPAL, you have to run it in the same directory as MARS.EXE. You do this by typing: MARSPAL ground-color sky-color cloud-color. So, to make it look earth like, type: MARSPAL green blue white. There are unlimited possibilities, and although the program still has no real use, it's fun to play around with.

What is Shareware?

Shareware is a special breed of software based on the honor system. It's known by a variety of names, each of which just means "try before you buy."

Shareware authors allow you to try the program at no cost. If you like it, you're responsible for sending in the requested registration fee. If it isn't for you, try something else. But please, if you find yourself using a shareware program on a regular basis, send the author his requested fee. This will encourage the shareware authors to continue providing you with quality products at a reasonable cost.

Rusty Edie

Dual Eliminator

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

BY GAELYNE R. MORANEC

CKit 94!

Mad Man Software squeezes more into new the Compression Kit.

Wouldn't it be nice to have an easy-to-use and accurate program to compress and back up files and disks? Mad Man Software took its Compression Kit program and gave it an overhaul — to CKit 94! — making full use of many of the C128's features, while maintaining compatibility for C64 users.

The Compression Kit (or CKit) was designed by Mad Man Software primarily for its own purposes. While working on a major game product, because the programmers lived in different areas of the country, a need arose for a means of sending each other accurate copies of the software for testing. They also wanted it easy to use and to allow for some compression of the files.

The CKit was designed to work with Creative Micro Designs' storage devices, and according to Gene Barker of Mad Man Software, the program is really not intended for stock systems consisting of a 1541 disk drive and computer. Rather, it's intended mainly for those with larger storage devices that need a method to back up the data to other devices for safe keeping.

Accuracy was the aim of the first release of the CKit, and having achieved this, the CKit 94! upgrade tackles the speed problem inherent of the first release.

CKit 94! checks for and makes use of a Ram Expansion Unit (REU)—the VDC RAM of the Commodore 128 (either 16 or 64K)—DACC (Direct Access) partitions in CMD's RAMLinks, as well as available computer memory to use as buffer space while copying and compressing. It also uses the 128's two MHz mode when compressing files.

Unlike other archival and compression programs, which require complicated commands, the CKit uses a menu-driven interface. The screen displays two windows for the source and destination devices, and will toggle through the user's drives and/or partitions. CMD device paths for subdirectories must be entered by the user, of course.

Parts of the whole

DECOMPER — CKit 94! includes Decomper, a program which can be distributed on BBSs so those who don't own the CKit can dissolve files compressed by it. The Decomper program could be considered a demo of the CKit itself, as it has fewer features, doesn't use any speed enhancements (like the CKit program does) and only dissolves files.

PROCOPY — Procopy is essentially a menu-driven file copy utility with a few differences. It lists the directory and allows the user to select files by highlighting those to copy. It then copies to RAM and finally to the destination device. If the option is toggled on, Procopy fully verifies the copies, both the RAM copy (before duping to the destination), and again on the destination device. It also has the option to either delete selected files, or to move selected files. The "move" option copies to the destination device and

then deletes the file from the source device. This is an option not generally found on most Commodore file-copy utilities.

ARCHIVER — For general back-up purposes, the Archiver is the recommended choice, according to the manual. As the name implies, the Archiver allows the user to select files and compress them together into one or more files. The user can toggle Verify on or off, and if desired, limit the size of the output files.

Output files can be from 100 disk blocks up to 20,000 blocks, depending on the capacity of the destination storage device. This option was included to allow those with large capacity devices, like a hard drive, to back up their data to a smaller drive.

A chart is included in the manual as a guide to what the limit for different destination drives should be, and how many disks it's expected to take.

The Archiver in CKit 94! is improved from the original Compression Kit. It allows the same menu-driven selection of files as Procopy does, and uses the above mentioned memory and speed enhancements at full tilt.

Aside from speed, the other improvement is allowing for MS-DOS file naming conventions. Archived files end with specific letter and number designations, and when used with CKit's normal file naming convention, it pads the name with spaces and adds its extension. The MS-DOS style allows eight characters and an extension without adding spaces. This change allows for easier file uploads to MS-DOS BBSs.

Disk and CMD Native Boas

In early Commodore history, there were utilities such as Lynx and Zipcode!, which allowed entire disks to be archived into one file and then uploaded to bulletin boards or stored for back-up. One did some file compression while the other didn't, and they worked only on 1541 disks.

BOA — The CKit's disk Boas (think of a Boa constrictor squeezing your disk), accomplish the same tasks, but do so on any Commodore-type disk or CMD device partition. In other words, it will compress 1541, 1571 and 1581 disks and partitions, as well as CMD device Native Mode style partitions. However, if you're in a hurry, the Archiver is recommended instead, as it will compress only files, whereas Boas archive and compress entire disk track and sectors — regardless of whether they are in use or not. This means if you had a file on a disk and deleted it, the deleted file is also compressed within the Boa, since it operates by track and sector.

The manual recommends you avoid compressing "dirty" (i.e. used) disks or partitions for this reason. As with the Archiver, if the menu option is selected, it verifies and will blank the screen for compressing at two MHz (C128 users only).

DISSOLVER — The name of this is misleading. The two mentioned archive utilities, Archiver and Boa, have menu options for dissolving the corresponding files. This part of the program instead converts already archived files to self dissolving files with a .MAD extension. Just as with the older .SDA (Self Dissolving Archive) files, .MAD files have a limitation of 192 blocks for the original archive. These files can be uploaded to bulletin boards and dissolved by the end user simply by loading and running the file, then following the prompts.

One of the original complaints about The Compression Kit is still evident in CKit 94! The compression isn't what it could be. Given the choice between a slow program with great compression, and a fast one with mediocre compression, Mad Man Software took the middle ground. For archival back-up purposes this is quite functional, but for serious BBS use, the greater the compression the better. An added option allowing for slow but great compression would have been welcome by the Commodore BBSing community.

The added benefit of the Decomper and .MAD self-dissolving files are still over-shadowed by the smaller file size of other compression utilities available for the Commodore.

Dongle protection/SID/CIA and printer conflicts

To protect their software from piracy, Mad Man went with a seldom used protection scheme of including a "dongle" (or joystick) key with the software. When CKit is first run, the program checks for the key and reminds the user to insert it. If the key is not inserted into the joystick port, the program will lock up.

CONTINUES ...

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Due to the checks made for this dongle, the computer must have an "in spec" CIA and SID chip, or the program will assume the dongle isn't present and will lock up mid-process.

My first attempts to use the software were unsuccessful, as there was a conflict with one of these chips in my computer. I tried a different computer and didn't have the lockups. The manual also suggests that some printers may cause serial-bus lockups, and to turn off or disconnect printers from the computer. Because of this, use of the CKit is a planned event rather than a fast utility one can load and use at will.

Practical uses

I used CKit 94! to Archive and back up the subdirectories on my RAMLink so I could do some rearranging and still have available the files I use often. The back-up utility sold by Creative Micro Designs, BCopy, would have been inappropriate since it backs up entire partitions, rather than subdirectories. I also thought that archiving subdirectories would allow me to have a fast replacement, should I have a need.

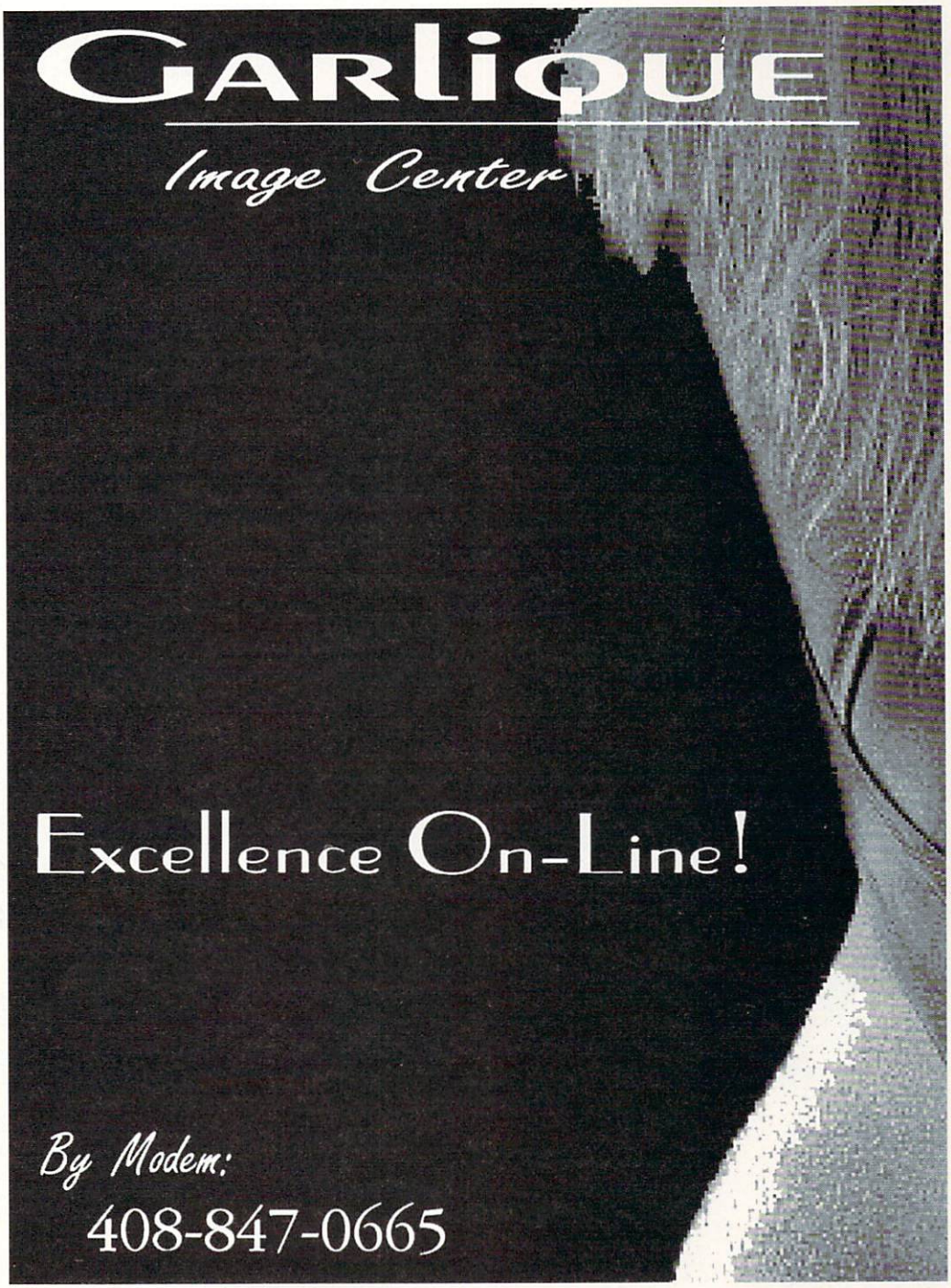
The process of archiving the files was faster than I thought it would be, even with full verification on. I used every possible speed enhancement allowed by the CKit, REU, the VDC RAM in the 128, and the two MHz screen blanking option. When done, with a great deal of trepidation, I deleted my Ramlink partition, created a larger one and dissolved the archived files back into new subdirectories. Then I wiped the worried sweat from my brow, as all of my files were complete.

A few days later when I accidentally deleted 500 blocks of needed work files, I thought of the archives, and managed to restore all of my work files from the same archives I'd made to test the program.

Whether the CKit's ease of use (in terms of its menu-driven interface and the Decomper program) will start a revolution in telecommunications use for Commodore users remains to be seen. Regardless, it does create fast and accurate back-up files and disks.

CKit 94! sells for $39.95 ($9.95 if upgrading) with a shipping fee of $5 U.S. and Canada ($10 others). Mad Man Software can be reached at 1400 East College Drive, Cheyenne, WY 82007; or call 307.632.1178.

Gaelyne Moranec is a freelance writer and co-sysop of Ancient Heart BBS. She can usually be found in the CBM Fidonet echo. Comments or suggestions can be sent to 1:239/200, gaelyne.moranec@wolverine.com or in care of BBS Magazine.



COURIER

BY MODEM MAGE

Modem #!@%!!

How to get around those XID and error correction failures.

Quite often data communication can seem like an ancient black art, cloaked in mystery and foreign tongues. This is where the Modem Mage thrives. Not in the dark secrets though, but rather in bringing the magic out into the open for all to understand. Over the next few communiqués, we'll venture into the tangle of VFC and V.34 technology. By the time we're done, both end-user and sysop should have a better understanding of what's going on and which modems are the best buy for traversing the online worlds.

If you read the nets, you undoubtedly have seen complaints from modem users regarding a scenario known as XID Failures or Error Correction failure.

To a user or sysop, this can severely limit your online activities. While many experience this problem, few understand it. Let's start with some basics and build over the next column or two. First of all, what's this XID (pronounced X - I - D, not zid) stuff all about?

The XID frame is exchanged between modems during the initial negotiation and defines error control and compression for the connect. This all happens before the "CONNECT" message, but after the datapumps (DSPs) have linked with each other. This XID information is handled by the modem supervisors and is critical to understand for a number of reasons. Of chief importance is that in order for the modems to exchange the XID frame, they must be passing good data back and forth. In order to do this, each must have determined optimal communication rates for the other modem's receiver. And this is where many modems fall into the depths of negotiation Hades.

You can identify an XID timeout condition in a number of

CONTINUES ...

fashions depending on your modem type. Most Rockwell-based modems report the failure as "V.42 negotiation failed." US Robotics modems show it as a Disconnect Reason: XID Timeout. It can also manifest itself as a CONNECT XXXXX/NONE connect message. The problem with these errors, of course, is that they typically mean you're starting at a disconnected modem session. Briefly, let's see why this is happening and what you can do to reduce the occurrence of such an annoying curve in the cosmic carpet.

The XID frame must be passed at a reliable data rate since without it the modems are yet to be operating with error correction. This process is also incredibly timing intensive. You're looking at milliseconds at this level. An obscure cause of a XID failure could be excessive line noise. If the line is so noisy as to not allow a clean XID frame across, the modems may simply give up. The most common cause is often termed a too aggressive DCE rate negotiated by the modem receiver. Remember, the modem receiver tells the opposing modem transmitter what it can handle.

The third possible cause (and not that unusual) is poorly implemented V.42 code. If the problem goes away when you disable LAPM, the probable cause is simply older Rockwell code. Most manufacturers will have an update to remedy this problem. The lesson in this last case is simple: be sure you have up-to-date code before blaming the other guy for problems.

Aggressiveness is an admirable quality for slaying dragons, but isn't always a good idea in data communications. We see this rear its ugly head in a number of ways. Several Rockwell-based modems by S-register or design have a tendency to first announce to the opposing modem their ability to communicate at 28,800 regardless of the actual quality of the line. This results in the user seeing a CONNECT 28800 message. If the modem's DSP then sees too many block errors (because it really can't support 28800) it may request the modem to retrain. And if this happens while the supervisors are waiting for the XID frame to pass, a resultant timeout condition will occur, and typically

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* $160	3710-A1-201* $180 PC; $190 Mac	N/A	N/A
CPI/ ViVa	ViVa 14.4 $180	ViVa 14.4 $196	N/A	N/A
Hayes Corp	Optima 144B* $179	Ultra 144 $249	N/A	Optima 288+FAX v.FC 28.8k $288
		Optima 144+FAX* $179 PC; $179 Mac		
Intel	SatisFax/400 $249	14.4 EX $269	N/A	N/A
	Faxmodem 144i $99	SatisFAX/400e* $245		
		Faxmodem 144e $109		
Microcom	N/A	N/A	N/A	DeskPorte FAST v.FC 28.8k $249
				TravelPorte FAST v.FC 28.8k $249
MultiTech	MT1432BC $400	MT1432BA* $400	N/A	N/A
	MT1432ES $400 MCA	MT1432MU* $300		
		MT1432BL* $450		
		MT1432PCS $575		
Practical Peripherals	N/A	PM14400FXSA* $215	N/A	N/A
		PM14400FXMT* $155		
Supra Corp	SupraFAXModem* $129	SupraFAXModem* $149	N/A	Supra V.FC 28k $169
USRobotics	N/A	N/A	N/A	HST V.Everything V.34, VFC, FAX* $249
Ven-Tel	PCM144FAX* $195	EC144FAX* $215	N/A	N/A
	PCMV.32bis* $480	ECV.32bis* $525		
	MCM144FAX* $380 MCA	RMV.32bis II* $425		
Zoom Telephonics	VFP V.32Bis* $99	VFX V.32Bis* $119 PC; $130 Mac	VFP V.FC 24k $99	VFX V.FC 24k $119 PC; $130 Mac
			VFP V.FC 28.8k $139	VFX V.FC 28.8k $159 PC; $170 Mac
ZyXEL	U-1496B* 16.8K $299	U-1496E* 16.8K $299	N/A	U-1496E* v.32terbo 16.8K $299
	U-1496B+* 19.2K $389			

* 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, Ttypically $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).

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.	(805) 496-4445	SYSBBS.TXT	(805) 497-4774	GO PPIFORUM (CompuServe)
Supra Corp.	(503) 967-2444	SYSOP.TXT	(503) 967-2400	supra@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	(800) 666-6191 (617) 423-1072	CIS 71333,1527
ZyXEL	(714) 693-0762	ZYXEL.TXT	(714) 693-0804	sales@zyxel.com

the modems disconnect.

If the modem has an aggressiveness setting (%E, &N, S54), care must be taken. I usually recommend letting the modem do it's job. If the device has the capability to determine what's best, why should I assume I know better and force it into a certain speed? If your modem is Rockwell based, beware of %E0. %E0 tells the modem to "Disable line quality monitor and auto-retrain." This sounds pretty scary, even to me. Many come this way from the factory so keep an eye out. Other aggressiveness settings like &N in USR's should be set to &N0 whenever possible.

Altering the aggressiveness of a modem by changing the available symbol rates is actually the best way to force a modem, if you must. This will narrow the scope of potential connect rates, while still allowing speed shifting.

In my lab I have mercilessly tested many modems and have found most to experience the forced aggressiveness and XID timeout problems. Two manufacturers seem to have tamed this beast; Hayes and US Robotics both perform admirably. While the Hayes does utilize Rockwell DSP code, they seem to have developed satisfactory work-arounds where necessary. USR modems experienced the XID problems early on, but also seem to have resolved the issues in their latest code. Connecting these two modems to themselves or each other seems to work rather well.

Next month we'll see just how well these and others connect to each other—this time not in a sterile lab, but in the real world.

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.

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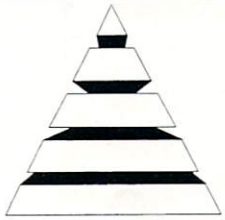

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I recommend only V.34 for sysops. End-users can economically afford to now live by the same standards. The V.34 ITU-T standard offers 50 percent more throughput than v.32bis, at only minimal cost increases. It also offers a better chance at a high-speed connect (24,000–28,800) than VFC under minimal line conditions. Beware of upgrade plans to v.FAST/v.34 modems, as 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 rackmount reduces the tangle of multiplying power supplies and becomes economical for sysops planning on larger, multiline 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.

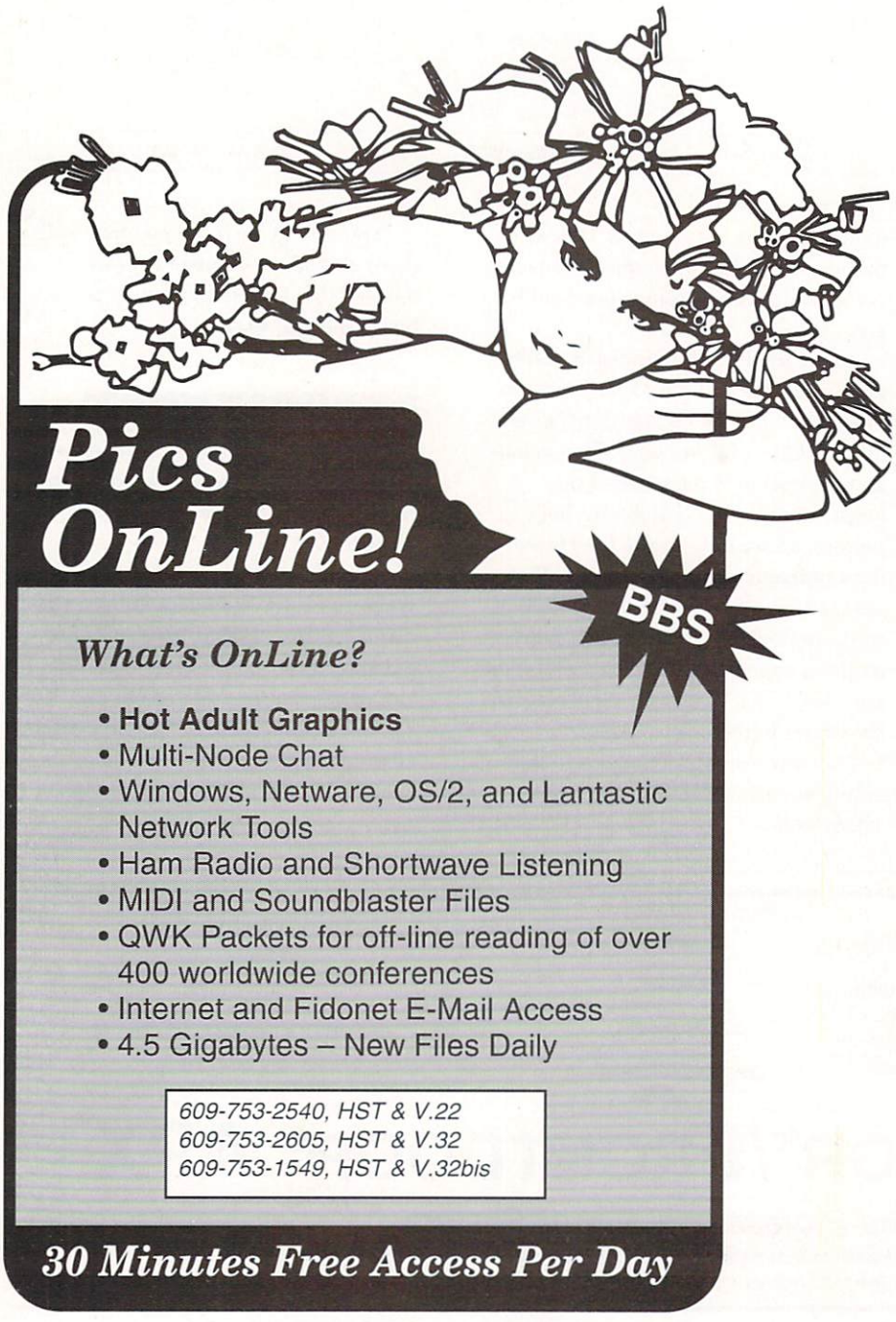
One requirement, which goes for nearly all vendors, is that they generally expect at least a one-line advertisement somewhere in your welcoming screens. For example: "Using the finest Model XYZ modem from Acme Modem Co." would be perfectly acceptable in all cases.

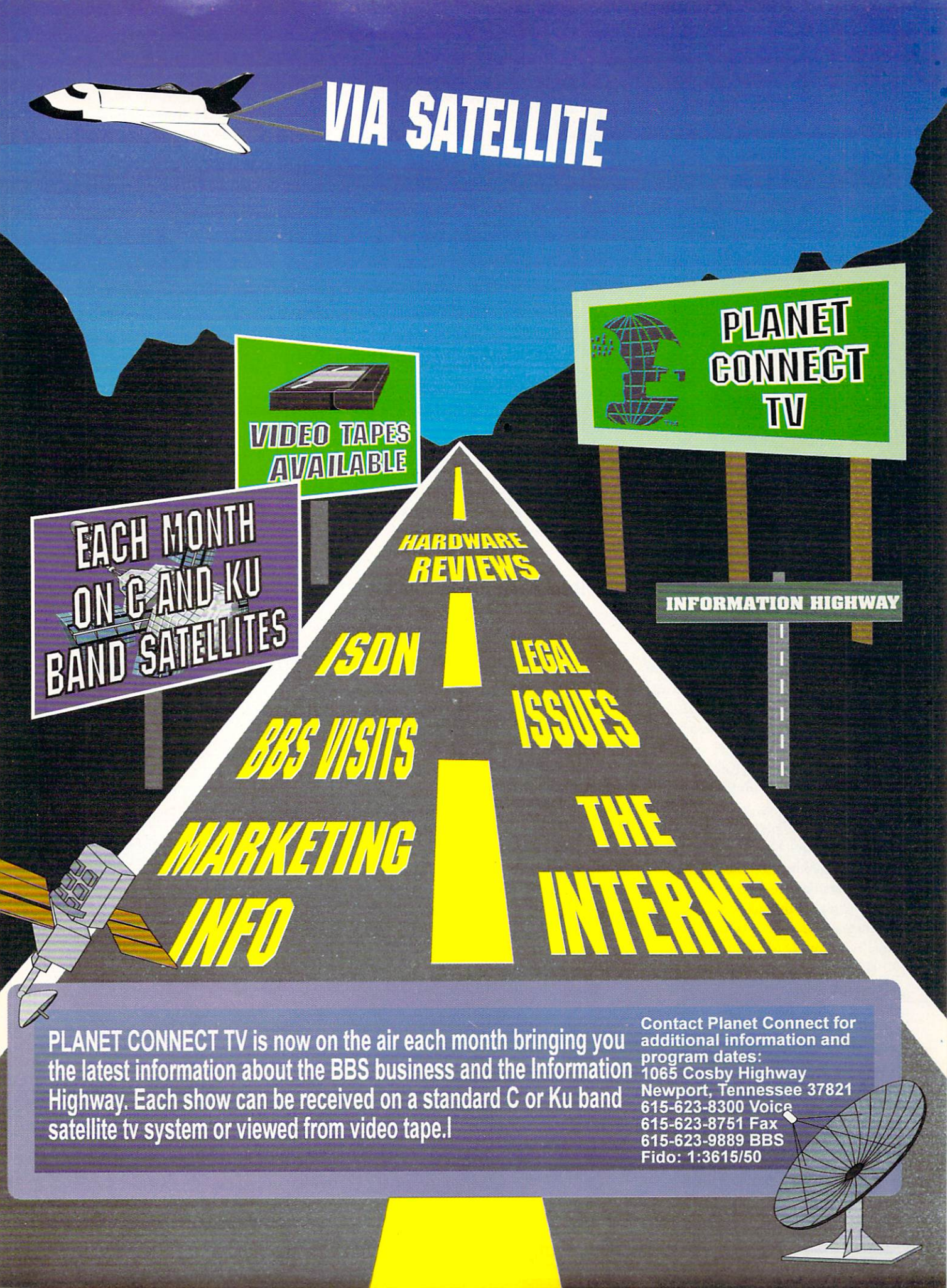
Order processing and availability

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.

If you have information about manufacturer discounts, please leave me a message at ModemMag@ais.net or to Modem Mage c/o BBS Magazine.

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BOOK SHELF

The Internet Business Companion: Growing Your Business in the Electronic Age

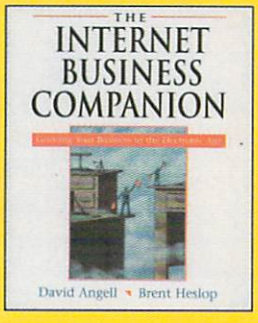
by David Angell and Brent Heslop
$19.95, 256 pages

The idea of doing business on the Net seems to have finally gelled with the corporate world. While lots of Internauts may find the whole idea distasteful, to say the least, businesses large and small are finding virtual commerce means the same in the end as any commerce: money.

Trouble is, many start-ups and established businesses are finding that getting wired is not as easy as the hype says it is. That's where *The Internet Business Companion* (Addison-Wesley) wants to step in.

Authors David Angell and Brent Heslop (Internet consultants and authors of *The Instant Internet Guide*), teach readers techniques for developing cost-effective business strategies. They illustrate how to reach and service new markets and customers, and how to evaluate Internet services, tools, products and consultants to determine "real" cost and benefit.

There's plenty of common-sense advice throughout, such as, "If you don't understand the tools and options of the Internet, then technical people (consultants, server services, service providers) will decide your business objectives, which can be costly." OK, but on the other hand, "technical people" might make you rich.



Some of the focus points here instruct readers how to:

- market products using low-cost server options;
- set up an online information source;
- create an Internet storefront for conducting online sales; and,
- understand the likes of FTP, Gopher, WAIS, and WWW.

There's an appendix filled with resources such as service providers, Web page designers, software developers and consultants. And a decent glossary will help you spell out (and figure out) all those crazy acronyms.

Visual Basic Power Toolkit

by Richard Mansfield
and Evangelos Petroutsos
$39.95, 950 pages, CD-ROM

Microsoft Windows has created a huge market for programmers, and Visual Basic is the software tool with which to tap it.

Visual Basic has become something of a phenomenon, with Windows applications—shareware and otherwise—popping up on boards everywhere.

Visual Basic Power Toolkit (Ventana Press) aims to take VB programmers to places they've never been. Authors Richard Mansfield *(Visual Guide to Visual Basic)*, and Evangelos Petroutsos write for the programmer, but in a step-by-step fashion with practical examples and sample routines.

"*Visual Basic Power Toolkit* covers sophisticated, advanced topics, but explains them so simply and clearly that anyone who programs in Visual Basic can easily add these impressive techniques to their own applications," said Mansfield.

VBPT shows users how to optimize programs for speed, create custom DLLs, use the new Visual Basic for Applications, OLE automate and exploit the best, most useful built-in Windows APIs. VB's database management language is explained, as is the means for creating visual transitions, image processing and user-friendly interfaces.

The book also delves into some of the more glamorous functions of VB, such as the integration of sound effects, voice, music, animation and video.

Development of data security is also covered, with the authors so sure of themselves that they offer $1,000 to the first person to crack the encrypted message in chapter 15.

Along with the book comes the *Visual Basic Power Toolkit CD-ROM* containing all the program examples from the book, sounds, animations, third-party demos, as well as original, unreleased utilities from the authors.

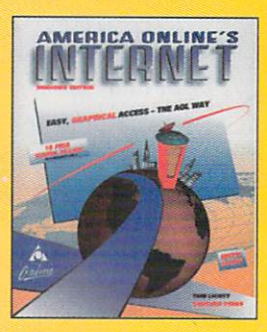
Ventana gets an extra plug for itself, too, as the book also contains an Online Companion, developed by Ventana Online and residing on the company's WWW server (http://www.vmedia.com/vbtoolkit.html).

Orders can be taken at 800.743.5369.

America Online's Internet (Mac and Windows editions)

by Tom Lichty
$24.95, 400 pages, free AOL time

If you're an OALer, you've probably heard about (or experienced) the wrath of experienced Net surfers. They're not always kind to those from AOL attempting to explore the ins and outs of the Internet via America Online's graphical connection. Fear not, however; help has arrived.



America Online's Internet (Ventana Press; for Mac and Windows) takes AOL members by the hand through the minutiae of "Netiquette" and the culture of the Internet.

Author Tom Lichty explains (with exercises) sending and receiving email, subscribing to mailing lists, participat-

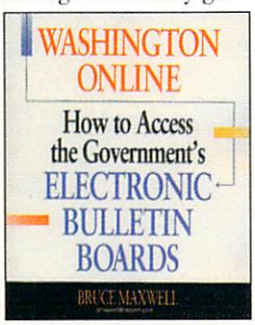
ing in newsgroups, searching with WAIS and Gopher, and downloading files via FTP.

The book is accompanied by a disk which gives new users 10 hours free online time.

How to Access the Government's Electronic Bulletin Boards

by Bruce Maxwell
$19.95, 340 pages

Last year we lamented over the fact that too many government BBSs were inaccessible—down, temporarily offline, unlisted numbers, or eliminated—and that in the future things could only get better. Well, according to one author, the future has arrived.



How to Access the Government's Electronic Bulletin Boards, by Bruce Maxwell (Congressional Quarterly Books, CQ Press), takes the reader on a thorough trip to some 200 free U.S. Government-supported boards. Maxwell describes just about everything you need to know, from how to navigate a BBS to what you'll find when you get there. Each BBS is given at least a page of description (data and voice numbers, time limit, snail mail address, email, files online, handy tips, and a few paragraphs about what the board contains), and each is categorized into chapters from agriculture to transportation.

The book is straightforward and informative, with few graphics getting in the way of its crisp design. It also claims the most comprehensive, up-to-date list of free federal government BBSs anywhere.

Overall it's an excellent resource for anyone wanting to download the "full text of Treasury Department Circular 570" or the bank of White House documents.

How to Access the Government's Electronic Bulletin Boards is the first volume in the Congressional Quarterly's Washington Online series, which continues in May with *How to Access the Federal Government on the Internet*, also by Maxwell.

To order either book, call 800.638.1710.

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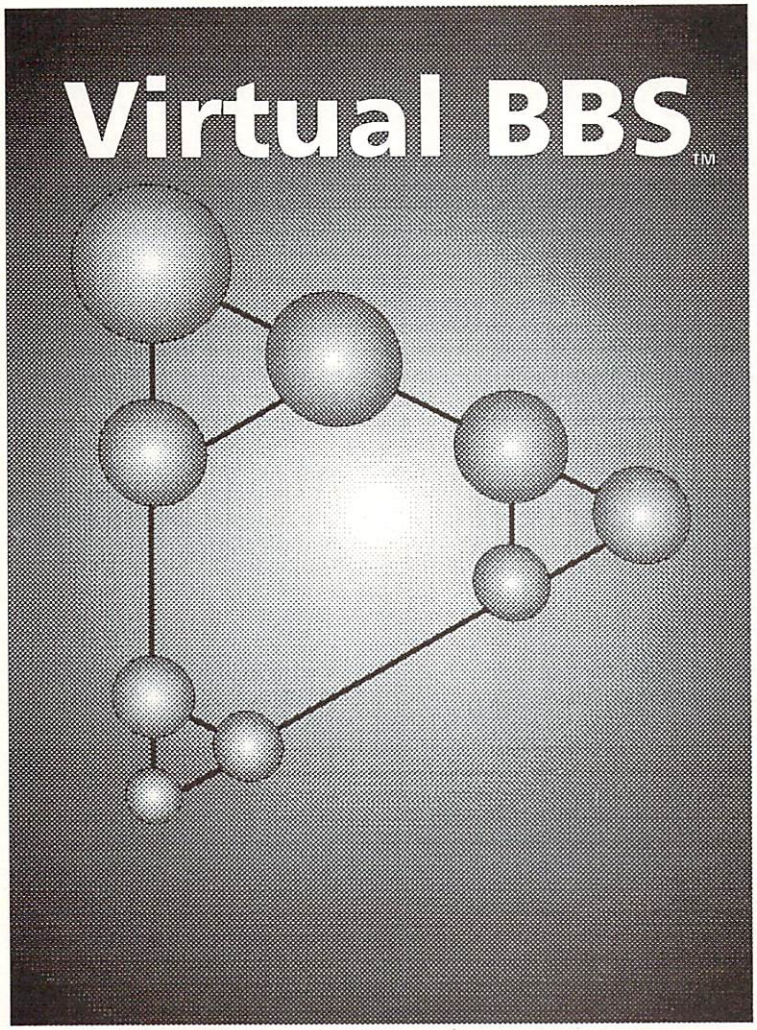

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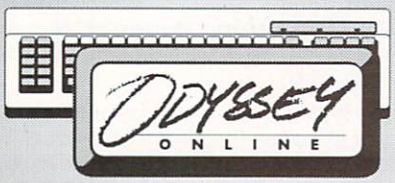

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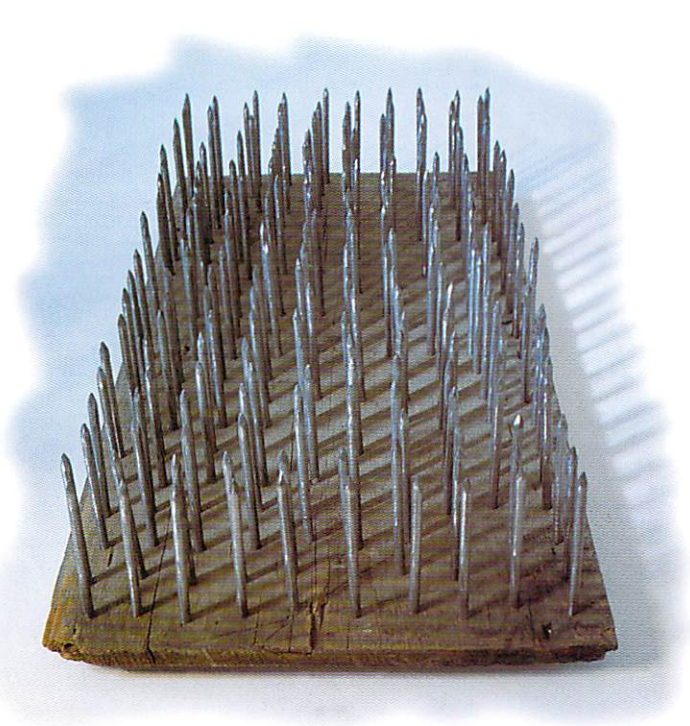

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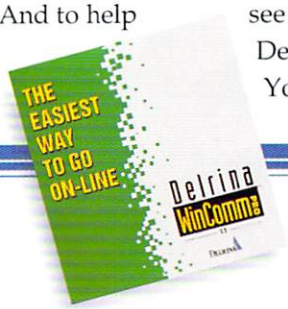

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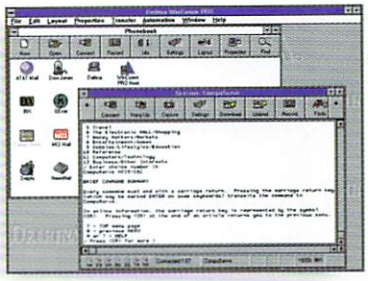

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PCComputing MVP FINALIST
December 1994

May 30, 1994

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FLEXIBLE USER INTERFACE

- Complete flexibility in design of data-entry, searching, browsing and detailed viewing
- ANSI, RIPscrip & 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

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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

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

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users will see online 24-bit color WIP menus

E WIP Navigator
displays the status of your current online WIP session

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- Customizable Dynamic Menuing System
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- MDB Compatible Audit Trail
- Network Compatibility
- Complete Sysop Defined Security for Every Feature
- Multinode Chat with User Defined Macros
- Royalty-Free Distribution of Client Software
- DigiBoard Support

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

B Company Identity
example of WIP image capabilities to showcase company products

C Application Icons
WIP buttons with Windows icons

D Messages
post bulletins and respond to message threads with spell checking capability

E WIP Navigator
indicates WIP menu status

F Status Bar
shows status of online session and indicates new mail

G Chat
live teleconferencing with other members currently online

H Chat Forum
choose from multiple forums the one you wish to join

I Write Mail
write E-Mail with attatched images

BBSA1094

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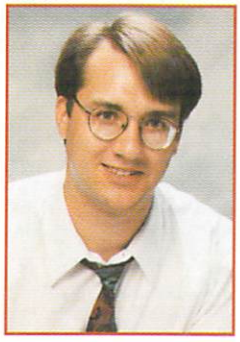
NEW *PCBoard* Version 15.2 offers Internet Gateway, Full Credit Accounting, Windows E-mail, dBASE File Access, Internal QWK, FIDO Mailer and more sensational benefits, all as "standard equipment" the other guys make you pay through the nose for, or don't even offer... And now you can try *PCBoard* for FREE



"I promised to offer the best value in Host Information Systems Software, and our new PCBoard Version 15.2 delivers big time, with at least 8 FREE, essential operating functions the competition charges you for or doesn't even have!"

Steve Klingler,
VP/General Manager
Clark Development Co.

By Jim Ackerman

Why is PCBoard is the most widely used BBS software on the market today... used by 23 of the top 100 boards, including Software Creations, voted top BBS the last two years... and the only commercial BBS software *ever,* to win *PC Magazine's* prestigious... ***Editor's Choice*** Award!

The reason is unmatched *flexibility* and *adaptability.*

And now, with the release of the new 15.2 version, PCBoard is such a superior value, you can classify it in a league of its own.

You get more connectivity, accountability, and ease-of-use, because PCBoard gives you more standard functions than anyone else. The new 15.2 dramatically increases your system capabilities, and reduces your need for costly add-ons.

As a result, you can use PCBoard regardless of the size of your board, and regardless of growth or other changes that may take place in the services you offer, the hardware you run or custom add-ons you employ.

Who wouldn't want these 8 essentials the competition considers options you must buy

1 Why should you be charged extra for such an essential function as an **Internet Gateway**? *You shouldn't!* So, it's part of the standard package automatically built-in to PCBoard 15.2. Most other BBS manufacturers charge you for it... *some charge more than their regular, standard package.*

2 **Credit Accounting**... surely the ultimate essential. PCBoard doesn't make you pay extra for things you *must* have. With the new Credit Accounting function, you can charge or reward the user for each activity and decide the charges for each; Operate on pre-pay or pay-as-you-go terms; Track in any kind of local currency you choose, or as credit units. And set your own peak times, including holidays. Again, maximum flexibility!

3 Everyone on your network can now easily use the new, fully integrated **Windows E-Mail application, PCBMail.** No gateway needed because PCBMail uses the PCBoard configuration and data files directly.

4 You won't need a costly front end to add **Fido access** to your board. It's already part of PCBoard 15.2. Out of the box, your users can do the "Fido thing" right from your PCBoard message bases.

5 **Built-in QWK** makes you popular with your users. And 15.2's QWK now includes Net Status and File attachments. What a time and money-saver!

6 Now, unleash the power of dBASE III and **Database Access**, with on-line applications created with the award winning PCBoard Programming Language (PPLC).

7 Your BBS can truly go worldwide with **Multi-lingual capabilities.** PCBoard 15.2 gives them to you, including support for 2 byte and reverse printing international character set.

8 If you're ready for **RIPscrip Graphics**, registered PCBoard customers download PCBoard's RIPKit FREE , so your remote callers can choose between ANSI, ASCII and RIP, on your BBS. This out-of-the-box capability presents the caller with a true GUI interface, complete with graphics, icons and mouseable point-and-click menus. Once again, maximum flexibility and adaptability for you and your users.

But wait... there's more

We've only scratched the surface. There's literally not enough space to cover it all here.

Like...you can use the same newsgroup names as the Internet on PCBoard because 15.2 supports conference names up to 60 characters long.

Save amazing amounts of time with our new, Automated, Rules-based File Maintenance Utility. Plus... local logins, 19 FREE PCBoard utilities, and even FREE support for MultiPort hardware, all "**standard equipment**" on PCBoard version 15.2.

How can they do all that... and without raising the price to boot

PCBoard was designed with an *open architecture,* so *flexibility, adaptability, reliability* and *stability* were built-in at the start. That's why PCBoard can offer all of this functionality... all of this power... all of this *value!*

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Who else gives you FREE Upgrades for a year... FREE telephone voice support for 12 months... FREE BBS support for life... and instantly installs as an upgrade from your FREE demo

NOBODY does it all... and only PCBoard installs as an upgrade from your demo. Just imagine the time and headache you'll save, not having to set your entire system up twice! Once you try our demo, give it a complete shakedown, and decide PCBoard is for you, simply install your full program upgrade and instantly be operating without skipping a beat.

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CODE: BBS1

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