Desktop Publishing
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\[ X + \exp(X) = 10 \]

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Imagine you have to "solve for \( X \)," where \( X + \exp(X) = 10 \), and you don't have Eureka: The Solver. What you do have is a problem, because it's going to take a lot of time guessing at "\( X \)." Maybe your guesses get closer and closer to the right answer, but it's also getting closer and closer to midnight and you're doing it the hard way.

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How to use Eureka: The Solver

It's easy.
1. Enter your equation into the full-screen editor
2. Select the "Solve" command
3. Look at the answer
4. You're done
You can then tell Eureka to:
- Evaluate your solution
- Plot a graph
- Generate a report, then send the output to your printer, disk file or screen
- Or all of the above

Some of Eureka's key features
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- A formula or formulas
- A series of equations—and solve for all variables
- Constraints (like \( X \) has to be \( < \) or \( = \) 2)
- A function to plot
- Unit conversions
- Maximization and minimization problems
- Interest Rate/Present Value calculations
- Variables we call "What happens?", like "What happens if I change this variable to 21 and that variable to 27?"

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Equation-solving used to be a mainframe problem, but we've solved that problem. Eureka: The Solver is all you need—and it's yours for only $99.95! That kind of savings you can calculate with your fingers!

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- Context-sensitive Help
- On-screen calculator
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- Powerful financial functions
- Built-in and user-defined math and financial functions
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Bruce Webster. BYTE 9/86

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- Turbo Editor Toolbox
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5. 5-term Polynomial

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- Interpolations
- Calculus: numerical derivatives and integrals
- Differential equations
- Matrix operations: inversions, determinants and eigenvalues
- Least squares approximations
- Fourier transforms

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- PC-DOS (MS-DOS) 2.0 or later
- Graphics module requires graphics monitor with IBM CGA, IBM EGA, or Hercules compatible adapter card, and requires Turbo Graphix Toolbox. 8087 or 80287 numeric coprocessor not required, but recommended for optimal performance. 256K.

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- Full 80-bit precision
- Pull-down menus
- Full window management

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System requirements

IBM PC, XT, AT and true compatibles. PC-DOS (MS-DOS) 2.0 or later. One floppy drive. 320K

Benchmark run on a 6 Mhz IBM AT using Turbo C version 1.0 and the Turbo Linker version 1.0. Microsoft C version 4.0 and the MS overlay linker version 2.51; Lattice C version 3.1 and the MS object linker version 3.05.

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Technical Specifications

- Compiler: One-pass compiler generating linkable object modules and inline assembler. Included is Borland's high performance "Turbo Linker." The object module is compatible with the PC-DOS linker. Supports tiny, small, compact, medium, large, and huge memory model libraries. Can mix models with near and far pointers. Includes floating point emulator (utilizes 8087/80287 if installed).

- Interactive Editor: The system includes a powerful, interactive full-screen text editor. If the compiler detects an error, the editor automatically positions the cursor appropriately in the source code.

- Development Environment: A powerful "Make" is included so that managing Turbo C program development is highly efficient. Also includes pull-down menus and windows.

- Links with relocatable object modules created using Borland's Turbo Prolog into a single program.

- ANSI C compatible.

- Start-up routine source code included.

- Both command line and integrated environment versions included.

- Introductory price—good through July 1, 1987

Sieve benchmark (25 iterations)

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*Introductory price—good through July 1, 1987
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- Houston Instrument DMP-40, 41, 42, 51, 52, or Hewlett-Packard 7470, 7475, 7550, 7580, 7585, 7586 pen plotter
- Optional Microsoft Mouse

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All or Nothing in Local Mass Storage

Computer architecture adapts quickly to different business and social needs. Two industry pioneers, Bob Metcalfe of 3Com and Chuck Peddle of Tandon, have introduced new and contrasting products that illustrate well the adaptability of computer architecture. Metcalfe’s new product is an elegant diskless workstation—a personal computer with no mass storage of its own. Peddle and his longtime associate Bob Taylor developed Tandon’s new Personal Data Pac—a 30-megabyte removable hard disk drive that you can easily remove from your personal computer, carry anywhere, mail, and even drop. Note that the storage medium itself is not removable—the platter remains sealed inside the drive.

Peddle and Taylor have collaborated on important projects for several years. Peddle developed the 6502 microprocessor, the KIM-1, and the Commodore PET. Immediately before moving to Tandon, Peddle and Taylor developed the Victor 9000, an outstanding computer whose success was muted by Victor’s financial difficulties.

The Personal Data Pac takes local data storage to new heights because each Pac can carry your entire computing environment in one small, convenient package. The 30-megabyte capacity of each Pac not only lets you carry large amounts of data anywhere but also take along all your software, including terminate-and-stay-resident applications like Ready! and SideKick. This makes any computer equipped with Personal Data Pacs a congenial work environment for those who bring along their own Pacs. Coworkers can easily exchange all the data relating to major projects.

The Pacs are shock-resistant to 300 Gs, so the data is secure in a traveler’s briefcase and even in an overnight express package. Furthermore, a system like Tandon’s new IBM PC AT compatible, the PAC 286, which has two slots for Personal Data Pacs, provides the fastest and most convenient backup now available—30 megabytes in two and a half minutes.

Tandon has designed some interesting security features into the Personal Data Pac. A password utility provides optional password protection for each Pac. Each Pac has its own coded, permanent serial number. Furthermore, the design of the Personal Data Pac provides support for encryption of all the data on the disk.

In an article beginning on page 85, BYTE editors Jon Erickson, Mike Vose, and Chuck Weston give further depth and detail about the new Tandon PAC 286 and the Personal Data Pac.

Diskless Workstations

The obvious reason for buying a diskless workstation instead of a normal personal computer is to enable a company or government agency to keep data secure. If there is no local removable mass storage for employees to carry with them, they will have a hard time walking out with sensitive financial or military data.

Many companies are selling diskless workstations. 3Com has just introduced a particularly nice one, pictured here. Called the 3Station, the system is a high-performance AT compatible with a memory cache for network communications and battery-backed RAM to configure the system to the needs of the individual user.

The 3Station is the brainchild of Bob Metcalfe, chairman of 3Com and principal developer of Ethernet. Because there is no local mass storage, the power supply for the 3Station is small, the footprint is tiny, and there is no need for a cooling fan. The 3Station has the convenience of built-in networking hardware, and the reduced number of components gives it an attractive price. (More on the 3Station will appear in the June issue.)

For many computer users, the cost and security advantages of the diskless workstation can’t make up for the absence of local, personal data storage. Bob Metcalfe stresses that any user on the network may prefer to use a PC and have local data storage—there’s nothing about the 3Station or other diskless workstations to prevent other network users from having individual disk drives. Metcalfe argues that diskless workstations are ideal for some situations, not mandatory for all.

Nevertheless, diskless workstations do have some disadvantages. Without local data storage and the ability to insert a floppy to try new software, individual users will experiment less and develop fewer new solutions to office problems.

Another Voice

During a discussion of diskless workstations at Esther Dyson’s 1987 Personal Computer Forum in Phoenix, a voice from the financial community suggested a different approach to data security on networks. Barry Margolius, assistant vice president, corporate staff, Financial Information Systems, Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner & Smith Inc., pointed out that giving each workstation its own built-in, nonremovable hard disk would prevent people from making off with disks of data and also provide flexibility for each user. This sounds like a good solution to us for both user and company or government agency.

—Phil Lemmons
Editor in Chief

Important Error Correction

Our April review of 50 dot-matrix printers contained an important error. Table 1 greatly overstated the sound in decibels of all the printers in graphics mode. Complete corrected data appears in Review Feedback in this issue. Our apologies for the error.
Maxell Floppy Disks
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In the world of communications, the result of natural selection isn’t always “terminal”.

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U.S. Losing Ground in Development of Pure Semiconductors, NASA Exec Says

The United States is rapidly losing ground in the development of "pure semiconductors," semiconductors that can be made only in outer space, NASA administrator James C. Fletcher says. Fletcher was interviewed by Microbytes Daily after the dedication of the NAS (Numerical Aerodynamic Simulator) supercomputer in Moffett Field, CA. "Most of the interest in microgravity semiconductor research," he said, "is on the part of Japan and Germany. The Department of Defense and NASA want to do things, but U.S. manufacturers just aren't that interested as of yet."

Fletcher said that the development of pure semiconductors offers the greatest commercial opportunity of all possible microgravity projects (projects that must be completed in zero-gravity environments, such as that of a space station). He said that pure semiconductors, which will be made from gallium arsenide (GaAs), are necessary for the development of cheaper, faster, and more powerful computers. Fletcher pointed out that the most extensive research in GaAs development is taking place in Japan. "We really have got to start worrying about this a little bit," he said. "Nearly all of our silicon is purchased from Japan now and the greatest interest in gallium arsenide is in Japan." Fletcher then commented that, in the U.S., "the Department of Defense has a very large terrestrial program in producing gallium arsenide, and they have an interest in producing pure gallium arsenide in space."

Key to the development of pure GaAs semiconductors is the building of the first U.S. space station, which would accommodate various microgravity research projects in addition to pure semiconductor development. Scientists can do things in a zero-gravity environment, Fletcher explained, that simply aren't possible on Earth, such as actually mixing gas and water. With semiconductors, "you want pure gallium arsenide to start with and you add the appropriate [impure] materials to make a semiconductor," he explained. In response to questions about the questionable status of the U.S. space station project, Fletcher said that "not building the space station would be the beginning of the end for the manned U.S. space program," and with it, the hope for pure semiconductors.

Walking Two-Legged Robot Controlled by Personal Computer

At the Spring National Design Engineering Show in Chicago recently, a professor from Clemson University (Clemson, SC) demonstrated what is probably the world's first walking two-legged robot. The most impressive feature of the new robot is the fact that it is controlled not by a minicomputer or an expensive parallel-processing system, but by a personal computer.

The robot, which is about two feet tall, is named CURBi, short for Clemson University Robot Biped. It was designed by Yuan Zheng, an assistant professor at Clemson. CURBi is controlled by an NCR PC6, an IBM PC XT-compatible desktop computer running at 8 MHz. According to Zheng, the robot uses a 900-line program and four databases that take up 512K bytes of memory for each step. Like humans, the robot takes a step, momentarily loses its center of gravity, and then readjusts itself by planting its foot for the next step.

Zheng suggests that bipedal devices may someday replace wheelchairs, allowing physically impaired persons easier access to stairs and uneven outdoor terrain. In addition, a bipedal robot would have an advantage over multilegged robots when climbing ladders or moving around in small confined spaces.

Nanobayes

Maynard Electronics (Casselberry, FL) says it's working with several disk drive makers to develop its ERLL (enhanced run length limited) as a standard. ERLL is intended to double the capacity and speed of a hard disk drive. Maynard reports it has sent beta ERLL controller boards to Seagate, Fuji, Maxtor, MiniScribe, Newbury Data, and others. After testing, Maynard and some of the drive makers will cooperate on specs that they hope will become an industry standard.

About that new DOS from Microsoft (Redmond, WA), chairman Bill Gates says it will run on existing 80286-based machines, will run most existing applications, and will "provide developers a new view of the world." New DOS won't run on 8086/8088 machines or on floppy-based systems, or on systems with less than 1 megabyte of RAM. The new OS is about as big as 500K bytes. "Microsoft will evolve the current-generation operating system and develop the new generation of systems software," Gates told the Personal Computer Forum. . . . Expertware (Santa Clara, CA) has its software-development products now running on Sun Microsystems' Sun-3 line of workstations. The company says its Configuration Management Toolkit and Documentation Support Tool-kit take full advantage of the Suns' UNIX operating system and distributed computing capabilities. . . . Kodak (Rochester, NY) tells Microbytes that progress is being made in its quest for a 3½-inch erasable optical disk. The disk, which will hold 50 megabytes, will employ an optical-magnetic technique that uses a laser's optical energy to thermally alter the disk me-
EI: 

**Erasable Optical Storage Expected by Year's End**

Look for erasable optical storage to make its presence felt before the end of this year, said speakers at the Systems Design and Integration Conference in Santa Clara, CA, recently. Several conference participants agreed that erasable optical storage media and drives will begin appearing in mass quantities during the second half of 1987.

According to Fred Geyer, general manager of Magneto-optical Drives and Media for Verbatim Corp. (San- nynvace, CA), a number of Japanese manufacturers will introduce 5¼-inch erasable optical media that provide as much as 200 megabytes for less than 1 per megabyte of storage. Typical media will have 14,000 tracks per inch, and drives will provide a minimum access time of 40 ms. Although less than $1 per megabyte for storage media is not cheap when compared to current magnetic storage costs, manufacturers view it as a critical price point. Geyer went on to say that Verbatim will have similar evaluation units available in 1987 but will not begin production until early 1988.

In other developments related to optical storage, Phil Devin, a senior analyst for Dataquest, told conference attendees that he predicts "IBM will announce a WORM product within the next 90 days," but he would not elaborate on his comment. Later in the day, however, Kenneth Majithia, a design engineer for IBM's optical storage division, told Microbytes Daily that such an announcement was "news to me."

**Scanners Hit Technical Limits; Need More Processing Power**

Optical scanners, increasingly being used in desktop publishing and other applications, have just about reached their technical limits, said speakers at the Microsoft CD-ROM Conference in Seattle. According to Jim Fruchterman of Palantir Corp. (Santa Clara, CA), a manufacturer of midrange scanners, both text-only optical-character recognition scanners (OCR) and graphics/text-document-processing scanners (DPS) have mastered simple character recognition, the first layer of a three-part problem. Some scanners have even mastered the second layer, character attribute identification (point size, font, etc.). However, the third and most technologically difficult layer, said Fruchterman, is for the machine to determine what the character means, a job that requires more processing power than current scanners have.

Bill Zoellick, director of the Alexandria Institute, a nonprofit CD-ROM center, went on to say that the ability to determine what the character means is tied into the concept of pattern recognition where the whole page is scanned. "This activity is right for technologies like parallel processing," he said, "where one processor is looking at the pattern on the page, others are looking at the characters, and still others at the graphics." Art Crotzer, of TMS Inc. (Siltwater, OK), a data conversion company that specializes in CD-ROM applications, added that the next generation of scanners will incorporate expert systems and artificial intelligence to make pattern recognition and textual analysis possible. Such technologies, Fruchterman said, will enable scanners to tell the difference between a 0 (zero) and the letter O or between the letter I and the number 1.

Gary Hendrix, of Symantec (Cupertino, CA), makers of the Q&A natural-language database, added that the technology to "read text and understand it as opposed to just scanning text is a long way away . . . perhaps a decade away."

**XLISP Program Plays Risk**

Because of its complexity, the Parker Brothers board game Risk offers a good model for AI planning systems. Scott Welser, an engineer at KnowledgeWare (Ann Arbor, MI), is designing a plan-generation program to play Risk.

The game is based on a model of world conquest. Players take turns trying to conquer countries and attempting to occupy whole continents. The outcome of each assault is decided by rolling dice.

Wesler's program, called Alex, was written in XLISP. (XLISP, by the way, is a low-cost implementation of LISP written by BIX's own programmer-in-residence, David Betz.) In its...
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microcomputer via the RS-232C port. TeleRobotics International (Knoxville, TN) reportedly will start marketing this month a software package that writes programs. Course Builder, which runs on a Macintosh, lets you construct a program using flowcharts and symbols. The software then converts the input into C code.

Herbert Schoor, director of AI technology at IBM, told the IEEE AI Applications Conference (in Orlando, FL) that around 90 expert systems are in use at Big Blue. The systems tend to be procedural advisors helping workers perform diagnostics and usually involve fewer than 500 rules. One such program checks disk storage systems at the firm's San Diego factory.

current form, Alex runs on an IBM PC. Because of the large number of possible moves in Risk, and the random nature introduced by the dice, a common search tree of all possible moves and countermoves would be practically impossible to build. As an alternative, Alex uses a planning system. In this system, the goal of winning the game is divided into a series of tasks, which are subdivided in turn into a series of subtasks. At each turn in the game, an Alex's Task Noticer filters out those tasks that are not possible to accomplish and ranks the desirability of those that are. Alex then executes the most desirable of the possible task plans.

Although the program cannot yet play a full game, it can plan and execute the beginning moves. Weston said it will be relatively easy to add a number of tasks for finishing the game.

Motorola's RISC Chip to Include Hundreds of Instructions

What does Motorola's semiconductor group (Austin, TX) do for an encore after its 68000 series? The 78000 series of RISC processors.

RISC processors have fewer instructions for a programmer to use; however, the ones that are there are fast. While a true RISC machine might have only 50 very fast instructions to operate on, the 78000 is expected to have in the range of 150 to 200. Additional chips to "glue" the processor to other computer elements might also be forthcoming.

Sources tell Microbytes that the first Motorola 78000 chips will be available in limited sampling quantity by the third quarter of this year. Pricing is not firm, but it is expected to be in the low three-digit range.

Notes from the Personal Computer Forum: Warnock Compares Chips; Kahn Decries 'Look and Feel'; Kapor Sees Long Wait for 386 Applications, but Gates Doesn't

John Warnock, founder of Adobe Systems (Palo Alto, CA), was asked at the Personal Computer Forum, held in Phoenix, to compare the 80386 and the 68000 family of processors. "With the 68000," Warnock said, "the large linear address space is already there. The transition to the 68020 is very simple. There is also lots of developer support from Apple." He contrasted this with the 80386 and the Microsoft Windows environment. "There is a cost extracted by Windows in terms of memory. Our application is large. The 80386 with Windows is attractive, but the time frame is the problem."

Philippe Kahn, president of Borland International (Scotts Valley, CA), said at the Forum that neither UNIX nor the new DOS from Microsoft has a competitive advantage. "Both are multitasking," he said. "Both are memory-consuming. Both require high-powered chips. There's not a lot of advantage on either side, and we're seeing more and more interest in UNIX."

Kahn also said he deplores the current state of discussions of "look and feel" litigation in the software industry. "It's not nice to steal from other people," Kahn said. "On the other hand, it's terrible if FL stands for something different in every single program. If there was anything to 'look and feel,' Las Vegas would have sued Atlantic City and would own it."

The man who helped bring Lotus 1-2-3 to market, Mitch Kapor, forecast a long wait for application software that takes advantage of the 80386. "The development cycle for applications for the 80386 is going to be longer than expected," Kapor said. "The 80386 needs the support of a graphics environment, development tools, and so on. We're looking at 1990 before customers derive significant value from 80386 applications."

But Bill Gates, chairman of Microsoft (Redmond, WA), disagreed. "It won't be the 1990s before you see milestone applications for the 386."

Gates said, "To see what's coming, you can look up to software on high-end workstations. We'll see some pretty amazing stuff on 386s before the 1990s. Basic features of the chip have been well understood for a long time."

In a panel discussion on new directions of applications, Robert Carr, chief scientist at Ashton-Tate (Torrance, CA), said, "We're coming into an era in which stand-alone products cannot deliver the benefits users want." Carr also noted, "It's a fragmented world now with new DOS, old DOS, UNIX, and the Macintosh operating system."

Paul Allen, cofounder of Microsoft and now heading Asymetrix (Bellevue, WA), said, "Applications programs need the ability to represent users' thought processes in both procedures and data structures."

Asymetrix is developing an application using a proprietary LISP-like language that runs on top of Microsoft Windows (see Microbytes in the January issue, page 12).

TECHNOLOGY NEWS WANTED. The news staff at BYTE is always interested in hearing about new technological and scientific developments that might have an impact on microcomputers and the people who use them. We also want to keep track of innovative uses of that technology. If you know of advances or projects that involve research relevant to microcomputing and want to share that information, please contact us. Call the Microbytes staff at (603) 924-9281, send mail on BIX to Microbytes, or write to us at One Phoenix Mill Lane, Peterborough, NH 03458.
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Subsampling Revealed
In the February BYTE, you published the article “Another Approach to Data Compression,” by Robert J. Sciamanda. The technique he suggests is interesting and useful to someone who knows what he or she is doing, as the author obviously must. Any procedure that helps someone understand the effects of aliasing in the data is certainly to be applauded.

However, I offer a caveat about Sciamanda's method. It is not “data compression,” as the title implies, but merely subsampling.

Before any subsampling, one should plot the spectrum, or at least the lower transform, to see where the power lies. If there is very little power at high frequencies, then this data can be subsampled. A much better technique, however, is to filter the series to suppress the high frequencies entirely, and then subsample. The reason for this is that if there is a concentration of energy at any of the higher frequencies (that will not be sampled adequately by the lower sampling rate), this higher frequency power obviously will be aliased to some lower frequency. For example, Sciamanda uses an example of an accuracy of 0.5 percent in the “reconstructed” data. Because he knows what he is doing, this is a safe bet on only 50 samples. However, if someone decided to do it carefully, and with a longer data set produced 1000 Fourier frequencies, only 0.1 percent of the energy would be in each frequency band; therefore, all the power in five adjacent frequency bands could be lost or gained at the 0.5 percent accuracy criterion.

Wilton Sturges
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL

I Have
In reference to “Anybody Here Seen Loglan?” by John Hodges (Letters, February BYTE):

James Cooke Brown is alive and well, working at the Loglan Institute Inc.

The Loglan Institute Inc.
1701 N.E. 75th St.
Gainesville, FL 32601
(904) 371-9574

John Hodges obviously appreciates the potentials of the unambiguous parsing nature of Loglan in computer programming.

The Institute has several Loglan computer tutors for learning the basic primitives and affixes. Other computer tutorial programs are being developed. The older publications are now out of print, but new materials are being prepared.

The Institute continues to operate on a shoestring. However, a small group of individuals continues voluntary contributions to the Loglan research. Contributions from Institute members and Jim Brown cover the necessary overhead. I am sure new members would be welcomed.

Glen B. Haydon
La Honda, CA

Random Questions
In the article “Testing Intrinsic Random-Number Generators” (January BYTE), the authors assert that the IBM PC has only a single cycle of random numbers, of length 65,536. This is patently false. To prove this point, generate a random number in BASIC, then compare all subsequent numbers generated without reseeding the generator, and count the number of values generated before a duplication is found. In two lines of code and five minutes, I was able to generate well over 100,000 numbers without a duplication. In less than 15 minutes, more than 250,000 were generated without a duplication.

The authors also state that Applesoft Integer BASIC can generate only a single cycle of 32,767 random numbers. However, they fail to mention that Applesoft Integer BASIC can only represent 32,767 positive integers! Is it possible that the authors testing programs for the PC rounded the floating-point random numbers generated to integers? This is never stated, but the inference is clear from their reference to the “flaws” of the Integer BASIC generator.

The inaccuracies call the integrity of the entire article into question. Amazingly, these conclusions were published before in “Interfaces.” Were they not questioned previously?

Either my colleagues and I or the authors are amazingly naive concerning the details of various versions of BASIC. If the authors are defining random numbers as positive integers, they could still have generated more than 65,536 simply by multiplying the generated numbers by 1 million instead of rounding them.

I hope that either I completely misunderstood the article or some important information was inadvertently omitted. If not, publishing such an article is an insult to the normally high technical standards of your publication. I look forward to a reply concerning this matter.

Dean Shutt
Anchorage, AK

The authors’ response:
My coauthors and I are pleased to respond to the questions that have been raised. The “inaccuracies” to which Mr. Shutt refers turn out not to be inaccuracies at all. We respond, point by point, as follows:

1. The IBM PC XT, when testing BASIC and BASICA, has a single cycle of 65,536 numbers prior to repetition of a sequence. The program listing shown below has been used to verify this finding.

10 DIM X(10),Y(10)
20 CLS
100 RANDOMIZE 111
200 FOR I = 1 TO 10
210 X(I) = RND
220 NEXT I
230 XX = X(1)
250 COUNT = 9
260 FOR I = 1 TO 25000
270 YY = RND
271 COUNT = COUNT + 1
272 LOCATE 10,10
273 PRINT USING "#######"; COUNT
250 NEXT I
270 YY = RND
271 COUNT = COUNT + 1
272 LOCATE 10,10
273 PRINT USING "#######"; COUNT
280 NEXT I
300 FOR I = 1 TO 1000
310 FOR J = 1 TO 1000
320 COUNT = COUNT + 1
325 IF INT(COUNT/100) < > COUNT/100 GOTO 400

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LETTERS POLICY: To be considered for publication, a letter must be typed double-spaced on one side of the paper and must include your name and address. Comments and ideas should be expressed as clearly and concisely as possible. Listings and tables may be printed along with a letter if they are short and legible. Because BYTE receives hundreds of letters each month, not all of them can be published. Letters can not be returned to authors. Generally, it takes four months from the time BYTE receives a letter until it is published.
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Letters

We have not, of course, seen the “two lines of code” Mr. Shutt refers to in his letter, but we firmly stand by our statement. Furthermore, although we find no evidence for “leading tails” of numbers prior to entering the cycle when using BASIC or BASIS, failure to test for leading tails of random numbers accounts for the erroneous claim that the random-number generator in Applesoft BASIC has long cycles. Thus the first paragraph of the letter is without basis in fact.

2. In paragraph 2, Mr. Shutt seems to claim that since Applesoft Integer BASIC can represent 32,767 positive integers, the random-number generator is therefore exonerated. This comment misses the point, which is that 32,767 is not a sufficiently long cycle for serious simulation work. The explanation for the length of the cycle is completely irrelevant.

3. Paragraph 2 also questions whether we may have rounded off floating-point numbers to integers when testing random-number generators. We did not round off to integers, since to do so would clearly be foolish.

4. In the fourth paragraph, Mr. Shutt asserts that “they could still have generated more than 65,536 simply by multiplying the generated numbers by 1 million instead of rounding them.” Any mathematical transformation of two equal quantities yields two equal quantities. The problem of cycles of random numbers cannot be avoided by any transformation, since a transformation of equal streams of numbers leaves you with numbers that are changed in magnitude, but still equal.

Doan T. Modianos
Robert C. Scott
Larry W. Cornwell

Inside and Out

I read with interest the article “Calculating the Area of an Irregular Shape,” by Rene Stolk and George Ettershank (February BYTE). A similar article, “The Universal Area Calculator” by Frank Ty

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mon, appeared in the September 1986 issue of Computer Shopper. Both articles noted that the sign of the area would be positive if the perimeter were traced in one direction, and negative if the perimeter were traced in the opposite direction. But both articles failed to mention an important extension of the area-finding idea which relies on the sign difference.

Typically, the technique yields a positive area if the vertices are taken in a counterclockwise direction, and a negative area if the vertices are taken in a clockwise direction. Thus it is possible to find the area between two closed curves by traversing the outer curve in a counterclockwise direction, making a "cut" to go from the outer curve to the inner curve, traversing the inner curve in a clockwise direction, and returning along the cut to the outer curve. The user only needs to be sure that the cut from the outer curve to the inner curve is retracted when returning to the outer curve.

Of course, this is just a computerized mechanization of the old surveyor's area-finding tool, the planimeter. The technique is a limiting case of the method for finding the area of a triangle, which appears in many analytic geometry texts.

Palmer O. Hanson, Jr.
Largo, FL

Easy as π

BYTE readers may be interested in a little-known pair of formulas that can be used to calculate π, the ratio of the circumference of any circle to its diameter. These simple, fast-converging formulas were not mentioned in the interesting article "Computing π," by David J. Crawford (May 1985 BYTE), nor have I seen them elsewhere in computing or mathematical literature. Yet they are simple and effective that they must have been discovered and published by others.

To illustrate, it is hard to imagine a shorter Microsoft BASIC program than the following one-liner, to compute π and print out intermediate results:

```
10 P=2: FOR K=1 TO 12: S=SQR(S+2): P=2*P/S: PRINT P: NEXT
```

The two formulas, used with suitable starting values, are given as follows:

Let

\[ s_k = \sqrt{s_{k-1} + \frac{2}{k}} \]

and

\[ p_k = \frac{2p_{k-1}}{s_k} \]

starting with \( k=1, s_0=0, p_0=2 \).

It can be shown that the limit of \( p_k \) is \( \pi \) and that this sequence increases monotonically (i.e., each \( p_k \) is equal to or larger than its predecessor).

The formulas are derived from summing the chords of central angles of a unit circle starting first with a 180-degree angle, then with two 90-degree angles, then four 45-degree angles, and so on. It is intuitively evident that each succeeding sum of these chords approaches more closely the arc length of the semicircle, and hence \( \pi \), as an upper bound.

Further, it can be shown that a \( q_k \) can be defined in terms of the pair of values \( s_k \) and \( p_k \), to be the sum of outside tangents parallel to the chords, and will always be larger than, but decrease monotonically to, \( \pi, q_k \) can be calculated jointly with \( p_k \) on each iteration to serve as a decreasing upper bound, matching \( p_k \) as an increasing lower bound, and pinning the value, \( \pi \), between them. \( q_k \) is calculated as follows:

\[ q_k = \pi = 2p_k/s_k \]

Of still further importance, a suitable "average" of \( p_k \) and \( q_k \), denoted \( r_k \), also forms a monotonically decreasing sequence converging to \( \pi \), but twice as fast. \( r_k \) is two-thirds \( p_k \) and one-third \( q_k \), and given as:

\[ r_k = \frac{2p_k+q_k}{3} \]

A two-line BASIC program that exhibits \( p_k, q_k \), and \( r_k \), starts with a 60-degree angle instead of 180, and reduces the required iterations from 12 to only 4 by computing and relying on \( r_k \), is given as follows:

```
10 PRINT " K P(K) SQR(8):
20 FOR K=1 TO 4: S=SQR(S+2):
30 P=2*P/S: O=2*P/S:
40 R=(2+P+Q)/3: PRINT K,P,O,R:
50 NEXT
```
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compute π to 16 digits of accuracy in Microsoft BASIC. (Exchange NEXT and PRINT in 20 to see intermediate results.)

Another "two-liner" can be used to compute π to 16 digits of accuracy in Microsoft BASIC. (Exchange NEXT and PRINT in 20 to see intermediate results.)

10 DEFDBL P — S: DEF
RUN

FNS(S)=FNP(S,FNP(S,SQR(S)))

20 S=FNS(S); P=2 FOR K=1 TO 12; S+FNS(S+2); P=2*P/S:
NEXT: PRINT P+P/S

FNS(S)=FNP(S,FNP(S,SQR(S)))

RUN

3.141592653589793

The definition of the function FNS(S) in terms of FNP(S,P) is in lieu of a built-in double-precision square root function in Microsoft BASIC. Line 20 is actually the entire program with FNS( ) used to calculate the square root. Incidentally, 100 evaluations of π to 16 digits takes 54 seconds on my Panasonic Sr. Partner in Microsoft BASIC, but only 6 seconds in QuickBASIC.

This method provides a practical means of computing π to extended accuracy, using a logically satisfying mathematical derivation based directly on the definition of π. The derivation requires only a knowledge of algebra, use of the Pythagorean Theorem from geometry, and accepting intuitively that the sum of an ever-larger number of smaller chords (and outside tangents) approaches the arc of the intercepted semicircle as a limit.

The formulas are truly elegant in their simplicity and illustrate the considerable power of recursive computation. Their obvious value as a pedagogical tool makes it surprising that they are not well known and used in classrooms.

John T. Godfrey
Punta Gorda, FL

Please Pass the Filename

When programming an application in BASIC, whether it be interpreted or compiled, you often need to pass a filename or a parameter from the DOS level, or from a batch file, into the BASIC program. Although such a feature is clearly a necessity, it is not covered in the standard PC-BASIC, GW-BASIC, or compiled BASIC. It may, however, be constructed using the environmental feature of DOS and, although this is a one-way street (that is, it works only from DOS to BASIC), it clearly takes care of the parameter-passing problem. Now, let's get on to business:

The following batch file accepts a filename as a parameter, types the file (just for fun), and then calls a compiled BASIC program, which could just as well be an interpreted version of the same. The BASIC program, in turn, prints the filename on the screen just to show that it got the name passed on right.

Calling sequence
batch myfile.ext

Batch file

Type %1
Path %1
Parms (Could be "BASIC PARMS")

Compiled BASIC Program

10 "SAVE "PARMS",A
20 PRINT "Pass BATCH parameters to BASIC"
30 PS=""PATH:""FILNAMS="ENVIRONS$(PS)"

continued
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**Wayward Diodes**

If you want to get the IRCOMM receiver diagrammed in figure 5 on page 106 of our February issue to work, find all three instances of diode 1N4148, and reverse the way each is oriented in the schematic.

**2-Bit Correction**

In the article "Low-Cost Image Processing" in the March issue, our description of the EGA board for the IBM PC was flawed. The maximum resolution of the EGA is 640 columns by 350 rows of 4-bit pixels, not 6-bit pixels as we reported. Although the EGA does have a palette of 64 possible colors, only 16 colors are available on screen at any given time.

---

### LETTERS

**Information Wanted**

I am an occupational therapist at a Rehabilitation Center in Burlington, Vermont. I would be interested in any information on computers and the handicapped.

Julie Sonack, OTR
Doquesbriand Unit, OT Dept.
1 So. Prospect St.
Burlington, VT 05401

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PC users often ask us how to network their many PC's. The solutions are many but expensive and slow. Advanced Digital's answer — the PC-Slave II allows you to add additional workstands at a more reasonable cost...and with much faster performance than any local area network or software package.

All you need to complete your 3-user system is the PC-Slave II, IBM's PC-NET software, and two low-cost monochrome monitors and keyboards. No new operating system, no new commands and no complications of a LAN.

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Inquiry 8 for End-Users.
Inquiry 9 for DEALERS ONLY.
Typesetting and Layout on the Mac

TeXtures, a typesetting program for the Macintosh from Addison-Wesley is based on TeX, the typesetting language developed for computerized typesetting and controlled page layout.

TeXtures' macro programming language lets you typeset complex tables, precision-ruled forms, and multicolumn layouts. It provides hyphenation, justification, pagination, kerning, and ligature insertion, and lets you number, footnote, and cross-reference pages, sections, and paragraphs.

With the program's WYSIWYG (what-you-see-is-what-you-get) editing capability, you can preview typeset pages, including graphics, magnified up to 300 dots per inch. You can also display typeset pages in a window or display the editing and viewing windows on-screen at the same time. Word processing windows let you input and edit text.

TeXtures operates on the Macintosh 512K, the 512K Enhanced, the 1-megabyte XL, and the Plus. The program supports two 800K- or 400K-byte floppy disk drives, although a hard disk drive is recommended. TeXtures uses standard Macintosh printer software for laser printers, according to Addison-Wesley. It also works with typesetters and the Apple Imagewriter.

Price: $495.
Inquiry 576.

Low-Cost Networking

Avatar Technologies' Alliance ZSL local area network, combines hardware and software to connect up to 20 IBM PCs, compatibles, and devices via each connected system's serial port. Avatar calls it a "zero-slot" network, because you don't need adapter cards. You can also connect any computers that have RS-232C serial ports.

The network is configured as a star, with each device connecting to the Alliance ZSL network processor. Each workstation and device is connected by standard telephone wire to the network processor.

The program is memory-resident and supports file-transfer rates of up to 115k bits per second. Print spooling is offered, so you can print in the background. A bulletin-board system enables you to display and edit files up to 100 pages long.

Scoop lets you fill or wrap text around irregularly shaped graphics, automatically or manually hyphenate, slant margins, and use fractional font sizes. The spelling checker MacLightning 3.0 is included.

Scoop requires a Macintosh 512K or Plus and supports PostScript-compatible output devices.

Price: $495.
Contact: Target Software Inc., 14206 Southwest 136th St., Miami, FL 33186, (800) 622-5483; in FL, (305) 252-0892.
Inquiry 578.

WHAT'S NEW

T

Desktop typesetting with TeXtures on a Mac.

Tandy Emulates Apple II

If you own an IBM PC-compatible Tandy 1000 or Tandy 1000 SX, you can run most of the software available for the Apple II family of computers by using Tandy's Trackstar 128 emulation board.

The Trackstar 128 includes a 65C02 processor, 128K bytes of RAM, and dual game-controller connectors (compatible with both the 16-pin Apple IIe and the 9-pin Apple IIc).

The board provides both 80- and 40-column displays on either RGB or composite-video monitors and supports Apple ProDOS and Apple DOS 3.2. Printer and serial ports, as well as music and sound support, are provided through the Tandy 1000.

Although most Apple software will run on the 1000's internal drives, the Trackstar can also connect an external Apple-compatible disk drive. This is particularly useful for running heavily copy-protected programs.

Tandy says the results of an independent study showed that 99 percent of the more than 400 pieces of Apple software ran on the Trackstar. The board must be installed by an authorized Tandy service center.

Price: $399.95 plus installation.
Contact: Tandy Corp., 1800 One Tandy Center, Fort Worth, TX 76102, (817) 390-3011.
Inquiry 577.

The Scoop from Target

Scoop, a desktop publishing program from Target Software, offers a WYSIWYG text editor with page-layout and composition capabilities, enabling you to display and edit files up to 100 pages long.

Scoop lets you fill or wrap text around irregularly shaped graphics, automatically or manually hyphenate, slant margins, and use fractional font sizes. The spelling checker MacLightning 3.0 is included.

Scoop requires a Macintosh 512K or Plus and supports PostScript-compatible output devices.

Price: $1195 for 8-node; $1595 for 14-node; and $1995 for 20-node version.
Contact: Avatar Technologies, 99 South St., Hopkinton, MA 01748, (617) 435-6872.
Inquiry 579.
A Lighter and More Inexpensive GRID

The GRIDLite Model 1030 from GRID is an IBM PC-compatible laptop with an 80C86 processor running at 4.77 MHz and a super twist yellow LCD that displays 80 characters by 25 lines.

Weighing 8 1/2 pounds, the GRIDCase measures 11 by 13 inches and includes a single 3 1/2-inch floppy disk drive and 128K bytes of RAM (expandable to 640K). You can also install up to 1 megabyte of EMS RAM.

GRIDLite is powered either through the AC power line or through an internal rechargeable battery. The unit’s rear panel includes an RS-232C serial port, parallel printer port, an RGB video-out connector, and a connector for an external floppy disk drive.

You can install up to eight application ROMs (up to a megabyte total memory). GRID sells InteGRID, a multi-tasking applications environment, as well as analytical and communications software—all in ROM. You can also integrate custom applications.

GRIDLite options include a 640K-byte memory upgrade, half-megabyte and 1-megabyte EMS RAM expansions, an external 3 1/2-inch floppy disk drive, and an internal 300/1200-bps direct-connect modem.

Price: $1750; 640K RAM expansion, $600; half-megabyte EMS RAM expansion, $295; 1-megabyte EMS RAM expansion, $395; internal modem, $495; external 3 1/2-inch floppy disk drive, $295


Inquiry 580.

The PC-compatible GRIDLite laptop.

PageMaker for the IBM PC and the Macintosh II and SE

With the new IBM PC and Macintosh II and SE versions of PageMaker, Aldus’s desktop publishing program, you can design, edit, and print using word-processing and graphics programs from a variety of manufacturers.

The Macintosh version lets you work with PC PageMaker files on your Mac, and built-in and installable word-processing import filters let you use IBM PC-based word-processing documents in your PageMaker publications. You can also save text files created on the Macintosh PageMaker as Word 3.0 word-processing files. PageMaker 2.0 for the Mac requires a Macintosh Plus, II, or SE with a hard disk.

PageMaker for the PC runs under Microsoft Windows and can import preformatted text files from Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, MultiMate, WordStar 3.3, XyWrite III, and Microsoft Windows Write. PageMaker for the PC runs on IBM PC ATs or compatibles with at least 640K bytes of RAM, a 20-megabyte hard disk, a graphics card, and a mouse.

Price: Macintosh version, $495; IBM PC version, $695.


Inquiry 581.

New Mouse Systems Mice

Mouse Systems has enhanced the serial-port and the bus models of its PC Mouse and has also lowered the prices on both. The mice’s performance is enhanced by new application-specific integrated circuits (ASIC). On the serial-port model, the new circuitry means the mouse no longer needs an external power supply.

The mice are being shipped with an expanded library of 24 Designer Pop-Up menus for popular PC business applications, including Lotus 1-2-3, PFS:Professional Write, WordStar 2000, dBASE III, and WordPerfect 4.2. Instructions are included for developing custom pop-up menus, and the mice are shipped with software that make them compatible with the Microsoft mouse applications.

Price: PC Mouse, $159; PC Mouse Bus Plus, $179.

Contact: Mouse Systems Corp., 2600 San Tomas Expressway, Santa Clara, CA 95051, (408) 988-0211.

Inquiry 582.

IBM Upgrades RT

IBM’s three new models of its RT Personal Computer have four times the memory, two to three times the processing speed, and an eightfold increase in floating-point performance. The RT’s Advanced Interactive Executive (AIX) operating system has also been upgraded. All use IBM’s 1-megabit memory chips, and incorporate a memory-management unit that lets you access up to a trillion characters of virtual memory.

The RT 6151 Model 115 is a desktop unit, and the RT 6150 Models 125 and B25 are floor-standing units. All feature an advanced processor card with a 32-bit reduced instruction set computer (RISC) processor with a memory-management chip, a built-in floating-point unit, and 4 megabytes of fast CMOS memory. There’s also an extended ESDI magnetic media adapter that will accommodate up to three internal fixed disks.

Owners of the original RT models can upgrade to new desktop and floor-standing models by purchasing an upgrade kit.

Price: 6151 Model 115, $10,600; 6150 Model 125, $16,100; 6150 Model B25, $17,670 (all single-unit quantities). Upgrade kit for existing RTs, $2495; 4-megabyte fast-memory expansion, $3800; 8-megabyte fast-memory expansion, $5000.

Contact: IBM Corp., Information Systems Group, 900 King St., Rye Brook, NY 10573, (914) 765-1900.

Inquiry 583.
Engineering calculation raised to a new power.

The only software program to combine the flexibility of a blackboard, the simplicity of a calculator, and the power of a personal computer.

Now you can write calculations on your PC in standard math notation—mixing text, formulas and graphics with the same free-form ease you have on a blackboard or scratchpad.

No new languages to learn. Simply type equations anywhere on the screen and MathCAD automatically calculates and displays your results as numbers or graphs—exactly as you want to see them. Change anything, and MathCAD instantly recalculates the results. Add text at any point to support your work. Then print and save your entire calculation as an integrated document.

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**WHAT'S NEW**

### Drawing on the Apple IIIGS

*With TopDraw, a mouse-based object-oriented drawing program from StyleWare, you can create drawings that are several pages in length and width on the Apple IIIGS with 512K bytes of RAM. You can move, group, separate, reshape, resize, or fill shapes and objects with patterns and colors. You can also flip objects, rotate them in 90-degree increments, and protect them from unintentional editing.*

TopDraw features the ability to edit colors and lets you draw with as many as 16 colors at a time, from a palette of 4096 colors. The program gives you a choice of fonts, type styles, and sizes for incorporating text into your drawings.

TopDraw supports the LaserWriter and the ImageWriter II.

**Price:** $99.95.

**Contact:** Axonix Corp., 417 Wakara Way, Salt Lake City, UT 84108, (801) 582-9271.

**Inquiry 585.**

### Hard Disk Expansion for Toshiba T1100+

*ThinWin and ThinPack are two expansion systems for the Toshiba T1100+ portable laptop computer. The ThinWin is an internal hard disk that replaces drive B. It's available in 10- and 20-megabyte versions and adds 8 ounces to the computer's weight. The ThinWin must be installed by an authorized dealer.*

The ThinPack 1100 is an external expansion chassis that adds 1½ inches to the thickness of the computer. Also available with both 10- and 20-megabyte hard disks, it adds two IBM PC-compatible slots that take half-size cards, as well as an internal rechargeable battery system with a proprietary low-power mode.

The ThinPack weighs 4½ pounds. Axonix says they'll be offering several half-length cards for it, including LAN, terminal emulators, expansion memory, ROM, data acquisition, EGA, data encryption, and a high-speed radio frequency wireless modem.

**Price:** from $995 to $1395.

**Contact:** Axonix Corp., 417 Wakara Way, Salt Lake City, UT 84108, (801) 582-9271.

**Inquiry 585.**

### Two RLL Hard Disk Controllers

*The Perstor 200 series of hard disk controllers includes two new models: the PS180 and the PS200. Both controllers use the Advanced run length limited 2, 7 encoding method. The PS180 transfers data at 9 megabits a second, provides 31 sectors per track, and increases hard disk capacity by at least 90 percent over a standard controller. The PS200 transfers data at 10 megabits a second, provides 34 sectors per track, and increases hard disk capacity by 100 percent. The controllers work together with any Winchester hard disk drive that's compatible with the IEEE ST506/412 interface. The PS180 works with MFM- and RLL-approved drives with either plated or oxide media. The PS200 works best with plated-media RLL-approved drives. Both use a standard IBM BIOS and are compatible with MS-DOS, PC-DOS, UNIX, XENIX, and CP/M. Both are also capable of supporting drives with up to 15 heads and 2048 cylinders. They come with an advanced error-checking and-correcting capability using a 56-bit fire code to allow twice the bit dropout factor of normal controllers. Both controllers have a 25-megabyte data-recovery circuit and sector-buffering RAM.*

**Price:** PS180, $495; PS200, $595.

**Contact:** Systems and Software Inc., 7825 East Redfield Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85260, (602) 948-7313.

**Inquiry 586.**

### Battery Pack for Toshiba Portable

*AdaptaPAK, a rechargeable battery pack from Product R&D will run the Toshiba T3100 portable laptop computer for over an hour. It consists of an adapter, battery, charger, and a zippered carrying case with a shoulder strap. The adapter's output power cord plugs directly into the Toshiba's AC receptacle, and the adapter's input cord plugs into the portable battery or into a 12-volt vehicle lighter.*

The rechargeable battery of the AdaptaPAK weighs 7 pounds. The battery adapter is also available as a stand-alone product called the Adapt80. Its primary application is for people who want to use the Toshiba in a vehicle, or those who want to use a different source of 12-V power.

**Price:** AdaptaPAK, $399; Adapt80, $299.

**Inquiry 587.**

### Protect Your Modems

*The Diamond Chip is a low-cost, high-voltage phone-line surge protector from Curtis Manufacturing. It has a swivel mount that rotates 360 degrees for easy positioning and installation. The unit protects modems, and all equipment that is directly connected to the telephone lines, from power surges, which the company says is extremely common.*

The Diamond Chip also protects data during transmission through unprotected telephone lines by helping to prevent loss or damage from surges or spikes. The unit plugs directly into any standard AC wall outlet. It uses the ground only and does not draw any power. A 6-foot telephone-line patch cord is included.

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*continued*
BOB STANTON HAD A GREAT IDEA. AN HOUR LATER HE WAS TESTING IT.

Appointments. Everybody takes them — dentists, auto-body shops, dance instructors. And lots of computer applications need appointment screens.

Bob thought that a calendar made a terrific graphic metaphor for taking appointments. Simply use the arrow keys to pick an open date, then press the Enter key, and up pops an appointment window.

Lucky for Bob, he's a CLARION programmer, one of a fast growing cadre of super-productive application developers. With CLARION's Screener utility, he painted a white calendar on a black background. Then he drew a white-on-blue track around the page and between the days. He typed in the days of the week — and voila! — a calendar!

CLARION knows that a PC monitor is refreshed from memory, so it treats a screen layout like a group of variables. Just move data to a screen variable, and it shows up on the monitor.

Bob set up dimensioned screen variables for the days of the month and a screen pointer for selecting a date, and he was done. Then Screener generated the code.

Then Bob drew the appointments window, built an appointment file, filled in the connecting code and tested it — ONE HOUR AFTER HE STARTED!

Testing was a breeze. Screener doesn't just write code, it compiles your source, displays a screen, gets the changes, then replaces the old code in your program.

So here are Bob's appointment screens. You can see the source listing to the right. We marked all the code Screener wrote for him.

**WHY CLARION?**

Why are application developers everywhere changing to CLARION? Because CLARION gives you all the tools you need: a coupled compiler and editor; screen, report, and help generators; an import/export utility; a sort/backup/restore utility; a formatted file dump; a DOS shell — and much more.

Because with CLARION's comprehensive data management routines, records can be locked and files shared on Novell®, 3COM®, IBM® PC Net & Token Ring, Multi Link®, and most other networks. Because CLARION is not hardware locked or copy protected. Run-time systems are free and soon you will be able to translate CLARION into native machine code (.EXEs).

And best yet, the price of CLARION v1.1 is just $395 plus shipping and handling. You'll need an IBM PC or true compatible with 320KB of memory and a hard disk drive. CLARION v1.1 also comes with a 30-day money back guarantee.

So call now and order CLARION v1.1. or ask for our detailed 16-page color brochure and reprints of major reviews.

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Inquiry 35 MAY 1987 • BYTE 33
Turbocharged Amiga Tower

For Amiga users who want the ultimate in performance, Computer System Associates’ Turbo-Amiga Tower attaches to the side of an Amiga A1000 and upgrades it to include all the features of the Amiga 2000, including IBM compatibility. The unit sports a 68020 processor running at 14 MHz, a 68881 math coprocessor, up to 12 megabytes of 32-bit memory, and up to 75 megabytes of hard disk storage.

The Tower comes with a 200-watt power supply, seven 100-pin Zorro-bus Amiga slots, four IBM PC AT-compatible slots, and one 86-pin auxiliary CPU slot. A special Commodore 8088 bridge card provides IBM compatibility with an 8088 coprocessor running simultaneously with the Tower’s 68020 processor.

For data storage, the Tower has optional removable hard disk cartridges available in sizes of 20 to 75 megabytes. These Winchester Secure Data Cartridges (SDC) are primarily designed for environments where high security is required. The Winchester disk drive or an optional fixed internal hard disk drive is connected to the system by an SCSI card. The SCSI connector is also available for external control of any SCSI product.

**Price:** Starting at $5475.

**Contact:** Computer System Associates Inc., 7564 Trade St., San Diego, CA 92121, (619) 566-3911.

**Inquiry** 589.

### New Capabilities

#### PC-File + Features

Report Writer and Other New Capabilities

**Buttoware’s** PC-File+, now written in C, is 5 times faster than previous versions and searches up to 10 times faster than PC-File II. The enhanced program is menu-driven, offers a teach mode, has over 175 help screens, and features a macro capability.

A new report writer features a report command language and the ability to paint reports on-screen. Enhanced searching capabilities let you retrieve data from multiple databases, sort fields, and perform global searches and updates on all or part of a field.

PC-File + requires an IBM PC or compatible with at least 384K bytes of RAM, MS-DOS or PC-DOS 2.0 or higher, and two floppy disk drives or one floppy and one hard disk drive.

**Price:** $69.95.

**Contact:** ButtonWare Inc., P.O. Box 5786, Bellevue, WA 98006, (206) 454-0479.

**Inquiry** 590.

### JustRAM packs up to 8 megabytes.

#### 8 Megabytes in a Single AT Slot

**Monolithic System’s** JustRAM board is designed for IBM PC AT and compatible owners who want to cram all the memory they can into a single expansion slot.

JustRAM comes in 4- and 8-megabyte configurations. It’s compatible with the Lotus/Intel/Microsoft Expanded Memory Specification (LIM/EMS) and can be used as conventional, expanded, or extended memory. If you use a non-DOS operating system such as XENIX, you can access a full 16 megabytes of conventional memory using a pair of JustRAM boards.

The board will operate at up to 12 MHz with wait states, and up to 8 MHz with no wait states. It has on-board DIP switches that let you set the I/O address and gives you the option of backfilling conventional memory to 512K or 640K bytes.

JustRAM uses soldered 256K-bit ZIP RAM chips and is filled to 8 megabytes using a mezzanine board that installs on top of the existing board. MSC says they use a proprietary noise-reduction technique that allows them to tightly pack the board.

**Price:** $1495 with 4-megabyte; 4-megabyte add-on mezzanine board, $1195; 8-megabyte combination board, $2690.

**Contact:** Monolithic Systems Corp., 84 Inverness Circle E, Englewood, CO 80112, (303) 790-7400.

**Inquiry** 591.

### Leading Edge’s AT-Compatible

**The Model D2 is an IBM PC AT-compatible system from Leading Edge Hardware Products.** Built around an 80286 processor, the D2’s standard configuration includes 640K bytes of RAM (expandable to 1 megabyte on the motherboard), a single 5½-inch 1.2-megabyte floppy disk drive, a monochrome monitor with an enhanced graphics adapter, and a 101-key AT-style keyboard.

The D2 system unit’s footprint is one-third smaller than the AT and measures 16 by 15½ by 6 inches. Six expansion slots are included, and the D2 is switchable between clock speeds of 6 MHz, 8 MHz with no wait states, or 10 MHz with one wait state. The system is also available with an internal 30-megabyte hard disk drive.

**Price:** $1936; with 30-megabyte hard disk drive, $2914.

**Contact:** Leading Edge Hardware Products Inc., 225 Turnpike St., Canton, MA 02021, (617) 828-8150.

**Inquiry** 592.
Real programmers don't use dBASE. Or do they?

We're finding that some very swift programmers are using it to write some very fast applications, and are completing their projects much more quickly.

But they cheat.

They use our Clipper™ compiler to combine dBASE™ with C and assembler.

With dBASE used like pseudo-code, they can then quickly create prototypes that actually run.

Then, with dBASE doing the high-level database functions, they use our Clipper compiler to link in C or assembly language modules from their own bag of tricks.

And they're finding that they're linking in less than they expected because Clipper compiled code runs so fast and because of Clipper's built-in enhancements.

Clipper includes easy networking that provides file and record locking the way it should be done.

Fast screens that can be treated as memory variables and eliminate the need for direct screen writes and all that tortuous heap management code.

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So if you'd like to use your time more productively, check us out:

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Or if you're on deadline, call (213) 390-7923 today.

Clipper could get you out of the soup.
Three New APCs

NEC's three new Advanced Personal Computer models are based on the 80286 processor and are fully IBM PC AT-compatible.

The PowerMate 1 is the lowest-priced of the three, with a smaller footprint than comparable AT clones. Its standard features include 8-MHz processor speed and 640K bytes of RAM (expandable to 8.6 megabytes). The base unit includes six full-length expansion slots (five 16-bit and one 8-bit), an RS-232C serial port, a parallel printer port, and a clock/calendar. Also included are two 5¼-inch floppy disk drives and a single 3½-inch disk drive.

The PowerMate 2 operates at either 8 or 10 MHz. It also comes with 640K bytes of RAM but is expandable to 10.5 megabytes. In addition to the parallel port, it has two RS-232C serial ports.

The BusinessMate is a high-performance multiuser system to which you can attach up to eight terminals. Its 80286 processor is software-switchable between 8 and 10 MHz and is configured with 640K bytes of RAM, expandable to 10.6 megabytes. It has a single 1.2-megabyte floppy disk drive and a standard 40-megabyte hard disk drive.

The PowerMate 2 operates at either 8 or 10 MHz. It also comes with 640K bytes of RAM but is expandable to 10.5 megabytes. In addition to the parallel port, it has two RS-232C serial ports.

The BusinessMate is a high-performance multiuser system to which you can attach up to eight terminals. Its 80286 processor is software-switchable between 8 and 10 MHz and is configured with 640K bytes of RAM, expandable to 10.6 megabytes. It has a single 1.2-megabyte floppy disk drive and a standard 40-megabyte hard disk drive.

The BusinessMate can support up to nine users operating under XENIX.

Video boards and monitors are optional with all three models.

Price: PowerMate 1, $1995; PowerMate 2, $2595; BusinessMate, $6000.


Commodore Upgrades 128

The 128D is Commodore's enhanced version of the C-128 with several new features. It has a detachable keyboard, a built-in 350K-byte 1571-compatible 5¼-inch floppy disk drive, and three operating modes.

The unit, which is smaller than the C-128, has 128K bytes of RAM (expandable to 640K). The C-128 operating mode takes full advantage of the unit's memory and 80-column display; the C-64 mode fully emulates a Commodore 64. The 128D also has a built-in Z80A processor for running CP/M programs.

The full-size detachable keyboard includes a 14-key numeric keypad, eight function keys, six cursor keys, and a separate Help key. The 128D also comes complete with a serial communications port, a cartridge port, and two joystick ports.


Contact: Commodore

Compaq Upgrades Deskpro 286

Compaq's upgraded Deskpro 286 desktop AT-clone now runs at 12 MHz, increased from its prior 8-MHz top speed. The Deskpro is also equipped with faster (100-nanosecond) RAM and available hard disk storage of up to 80 megabytes.

The processor speed of the enhanced Deskpro 286 is keyboard-switchable to 8 MHz for applications that require a slower speed. Meanwhile, to ensure compatibility with AT-type expansion boards, the expansion bus of the Deskpro 286 always runs at 8 MHz.

The Deskpro has seven available expansion slots. The enhanced Deskpro 286 is available in three standard configurations. The Model 1 has a single 1.2-megabyte floppy disk drive and 256K bytes of RAM; the Model 20 adds a 20-megabyte hard disk, and 640K bytes of RAM; the Model 40 has a 40-megabyte hard disk drive.

Many options are also available.

Price: Model 1, $2999; Model 20, $3999; Model 40, $4999.

Contact: Compaq Computer Corp., 20555 FM 149, Houston, TX 77070, (713) 370-0670.

Two 386 Machines

The Noble 386 from PC Discount is an 80386-based personal computer that comes with the same standard features as the Compaq 386, including a 40-megabyte hard disk drive, 1.2-megabyte floppy disk drive, and 1 megabyte of RAM.

Price: $3999.

Contact: PC Discount, 2000 Travis, Suite 630, Houston, TX 77002, (713) 864-0295.

American Micro Technology's AMT-386 runs at either 6 MHz or 16 MHz and has a 64K-byte cache memory that allows operation with no wait states. The base unit has eight expansion slots and 1 megabyte of memory (expandable to 4 megabytes on the motherboard). It comes with a single 1.2-megabyte floppy disk drive. A hard disk is optional.

Price: $2995.

Contact: American Micro Technology, 14751-B Franklin Ave., Tustin, CA 92680, (714) 731-6800.

Inquiry 596.
It takes four of theirs to display the same text and graphics as one Amdek 1280.

Now, you can create more comprehensive and detailed documents using the most popular Desktop Publishing packages. Because Amdek's 1280 graphics subsystem puts 1280 X 800 pixels on a big 15" white phosphor CRT. There are a total of 11 modes. What’s more, the 1280 provides complete monochrome and color graphics compatibility.

Price? The Amdek 1280 monitor and video board cost only $999. So, if you work with desktop publishing, CAD or Lotus, Amdek's 1280 graphics subsystem is clearly your best buy.

The Amdek 1280 provides 1280(H) X 800(V) resolution with these software packages:

**GENERAL PC SOFTWARE**
- Lotus 1-2-3
- Symphony

**DESKTOP PUBLISHING**
- AdvanTex
- Venture Publishing
- PageMaker/PC
- Frontpage
- DeskSet
- Pagemaster
- Rim Systems
- Compound Document Processor
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Phone: (312) 364-1180  TLX: 280-805

Inquiry 20
Networking High-Speed Printer

Output Technology's TriMatrix 850 PrintNet is a dot-matrix printer with built-in networking capabilities. Up to five users can connect directly to the PrintNet through serial ports. Besides being a printing station for multiple users, the unit also acts as a network communications controller and memory storage unit. Any device capable of serial communications (computers, printers, modems, etc.) can be connected to the 850 PrintNet and can exchange data in RS-232C or RS-422 formats at speeds of up to 19.2 kbps. The PrintNet 850 handles forms up to 136 columns wide and forms with up to six parts. The company claims the printer throughput is 240 lines per minute, with a burst speed of up to 850 characters per second. It has 256K bytes of internal memory, and a 1.5-megabyte option is available.

**Price:** $2995.
**Contact:** Output Technology Corp., East 9922 Montgomery, Suite 6, Spokane, WA 99206, (509) 926-3855.
**Inquiry 598.**

Bizcomp 2400-bps Echo-Canceling Modems

The IntelliModem 2400 is available in both external and internal configurations, is fully Hayes-compatible, and uses the company's proprietary Adaptive Echo Cancelation (AEC) for augmenting traditional adaptive equalization. AEC creates a lookalike copy of the near-end echo signal it expects back from the telephone line, then inverts it. When the synthetic negative echo adds to the genuine positive echo, they cancel each other out. The purpose of the AEC is to cut down transmission errors caused by poor line conditions.

The IntelliModem 2400 also supports 1200 or 110 to 300 bps and includes audio call-progress monitoring with adjustable volume controls and RJ-11 connectors for connecting telephone sets. The external model features a multicolor signal quality bar graph display and easy access to options, including volume controls, portables.

**Price:** $599.
**Contact:** Bizcomp Corp., 532 Mercury Dr., Sunnyvale, CA 94086, (408) 733-7800.
**Inquiry 599.**

Disk Drive for Tandy Portables

The Tandy Portable Disk Drive 2 is a new version of a 3½-inch floppy disk drive that works with the Tandy 102 and Tandy 200 portable computers. Measuring 2½ by 5¾ by 6¾ inches, the unit weighs less than 2 pounds and operates off AC power with an included adapter, or off four AA alkaline batteries. Tandy says the batteries will operate the drive continuously for 1½ hours.

The Drive 2 stores 200K bytes of data on a single-sided 3½-inch disk and has both disk-access and low-battery indicators. It transfers data through the computer's serial port at 19.2 kbps.

**Price:** $199.95.
**Contact:** Tandy Corp., 1800 One Tandy Center, Fort Worth, TX 76102, (817) 390-3011.
**Inquiry 600.**

HP's Desktop Scanner

Hewlett-Packard's HP ScanJet scanner is a flatbed desktop scanner that enables you to electronically scan documents for use in desktop-publishing applications. It transfers data through the computer's serial port at 19.2k bps.

**Price:** $1495.
**Contact:** Hewlett-Packard Co., 1820 Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94303, (800) 367-4772.
**Inquiry 601.**

Nine-ounce Portable Modem

The Pocket Modem from Migent runs at 1200 bps, weighs only 9 ounces, and measures 1.3 by 2.5 by 5 inches; small enough to fit in a shirt pocket. It operates either off a standard 9-V battery or with a 110-V AC adapter and uses surface-mount technology. The unit has dual telephone jacks, busy and dial-tone monitoring, and can sense remote rings and tones. It also has a 28-character nonvolatile memory for storing telephone numbers and access codes.

Included with the Pocket Modem are a communications software package, a 7-foot telephone-line cord, an 18-inch serial cable, and a 9-V battery.

**Price:** $259.99.
**Contact:** Migent Inc., P.O. Box 6062, Incline Village, NV 89450, (702) 832-3700.
**Inquiry 602.**

continued
New! In•a•Vision is Compatible with AutoCAD

Complex Drawing Made Easy

We created In-a-Vision just for you. The engineer who needs more productive drafting support. The designer who needs versatility for alternate ideas or quick revisions. The architect who needs to manage a variety of working drawings. And the businessman who needs first-class presentation materials as well as detailed flow charts and organization charts.

Point. Click. Draw.

Now all you do to create complex technical drawings, systems designs, blueprints, diagrams, illustrations, and proposals is point, click and draw. With In-a-Vision's mouse support, windowing, icons, and pull-down menus, you produce drawings more quickly, accurately and efficiently than ever before. In-a-Vision's advanced technology includes many features not found on comparable systems costing thousands more. For example, you can pan around in a user-definable drawing space up to 68" x 68" and zoom in on specific areas for greater detail. Scale, rotate and dimension symbols, fill an area with your choices of predefined colors and patterns, as well as draw lines with multiple styles and widths. Other features include overlays, predefined and user-definable page sizes, rulers, grids, and templates to speed popular applications.

Multi-tasking in a PC-based CAD system.

In-a-Vision uses multi-tasking to enable you to continue drawing while printing hard copies or edit multiple drawings simultaneously.

FREE AutoCAD Translator from MICROGRAF FX!

When you purchase In-a-Vision we'll give you a free copy of our new AutoCAD™ translator. The Micrografx AutoCAD TRANSLATOR (retail value $100) bi-directionally transforms all drawing attributes including colors, line styles, overlays, fonts, views and object hierarchy. (Send proof of purchase and your registration card to Micrografx and we'll return your free translator*.)

We're confident you'll agree — In-a-Vision will make your complex drawing tasks simple and make you more productive. Satisfaction guaranteed.

TO ORDER CALL: 800-272-3729

Demo disk** or brochure available to qualified customers. In Texas or for customer support, call (214) 234-1769.

MICROGRAFX, Inc., 1820 North Greenville Avenue, Richardson, Texas 75081.

Inquiry 199

*Offer good only on purchases after January 1, 1987
**Demo requires MS Windows. Full demonstration system for users without Windows available for $49.95.
(Most popular graphics cards, plotters, and printers supported.)

Microsoft Windows-compatible. Call for specific operating environment requirements.

AutoCAD is a trademark of Autodesk, Inc.
In-a-Vision, Micrografx AutoCAD TRANSLATOR, and MICROGRAFX are trademarks of MICROGRAFX, Inc.
Microsoft is a trademark of Microsoft, Inc.
Introducing the Hercules InColor Card.

It runs more software at a higher resolution than any other color graphics card.

The Hercules InColor Card offers everything you'd expect from a high resolution color graphics card from Hercules — and more.

Compatibility: The InColor Card is compatible with the thousands of programs that run on our monochrome cards.

Color: The InColor Card gives color capability to Hercules-compatible software like 1-2-3 and AutoCAD.

Resolution: The InColor Card's resolution of 720x348 is the highest of any widely supported standard.

RamFont: The InColor Card has our unique RamFont mode — in color.

Better graphics.

Hercules is known for bringing high resolution monochrome text and graphics to programs like 1-2-3 and AutoCAD.

Now the InColor Card gives you the same high resolution 720x348 graphics in up to 16 colors using an IBM Enhanced Color Display, multisync monitor, or equivalent.

That's the highest resolution of any widely supported graphics standard.

And no other color graphics card allows you to move back and forth between color and monochrome systems without changing drivers.

Runs more software.

All Hercules-compatible text, graphics and RamFont software runs on the InColor Card in black and white, or at least two colors.

And many popular programs like 1-2-3, Symphony, AutoCAD and Microsoft Windows that use graphics or RamFont, run in full color.

More powerful RamFont.

RamFont is a new mode developed by Hercules that gives your software the ability to display multiple fonts at lightning fast speeds.

RamFont transforms advanced word processors like Microsoft Word from slow to text-mode fast.

Technical word processors like Lotus Manuscript use RamFont.
to display onscreen the text you want to print.

Even 1-2-3 uses RamFont to almost double the size of the spreadsheet picture.

And now, with the InColor Card, you get an enhanced RamFont with 3,072 programmable characters in up to 16 colors.

All the way up to 12,288 characters in four colors.

With the InColor Card’s RamFont, no program should run out of speed, color or fonts ever again.

What the InColor Card could mean to your company.

The InColor Card allows you to run a program in color, and then move to a Hercules Graphics Card Plus and run the same program in monochrome.

Without changing drivers.

Compatibility between the InColor Card and our monochrome card allows you to network around one standard Hercules. At last your PCs will have compatible graphics, in color or monochrome.

Remember, only the InColor Card has color-to-monochrome compatibility, high resolution text and graphics, and the power of color RamFont.

To find out more about the new Hercules InColor Card, call 1-800-532-0600 Ext. 502. (In Canada, call 1-800-323-0601 Ext. 502.)

AutoCAD gets the same high resolution 720x348 graphics as our famous monochrome cards—only now in full color on an IBM Enhanced Color Display.

Features of the Hercules InColor Card

- Hi-res text with 9x14 character size in up to 16 colors with attributes
- 720x348 Hercules graphics in 16 colors selected from 64 color palette
- Special RamFont mode displays 3,072 programmable characters in 16 colors with attributes, up to 12,288 characters in 4 colors
- Runs Hercules-compatible graphics software in b&w or any two background colors
- Designed for use with the IBM Enhanced Color Display, multisync monitors, or equivalents
- Software diskette includes font editor, sample fonts, and Hercules utilities
- Parallel printer port
- Two year warranty

The New Hercules InColor Card.
WHAT'S NEW

ADD-INS

NEC's Ultrahigh-Resolution Graphics Board

The MultiSync Color Graphics Board from NEC Home Electronics U.S.A. is an ultrahigh-resolution 16-color display card with a resolution of 640 by 480 pixels, functionally equivalent to the IBM Professional Graphics Adapter.

The board requires an NEC MultiSync monitor (or equivalent). Compatibility for running software in CGA (color graphics adapter), EGA (enhanced graphics adapter), MDA (monochrome display adapter), and Hercules modes is made possible through the board's high-speed hardware, which also supports all true EGA functions. It includes extended text modes, which let you display text of 80 characters by 60 lines, or spread-sheets with up to 132 columns by 44 lines.

Screen drivers are provided to let users of Lotus 1-2-3, Dr. Halo, and Auto-CAD take full advantage of the 640 by 480 resolution mode with Microsoft Windows.

Other features include a parallel printer port, print spooler software, and hardware zoom and viewport to let you zoom in on an image at up to eight times magnification for detailed viewing or pixel editing. The MultiSync Color Graphics Board uses an ET2000 chip set with a micro-engine that assumes certain CPU functions such as bit-mapped graphics memory read/write. NEC claims this results in a speed improvement of up to 300 percent.

Price: $649.
Contact: NEC Home Electronics (U.S.A.) Inc., 1255 Michael Dr., Wood Dale, IL 60191, (312) 860-9500.
Inquiry 603.

Atari Upgradable RAM Board

The ST Solderless RAM board is a RAM upgrade for the Atari 520ST computer. It features solderless plug-in installation and comes with enough RAM to upgrade a 520ST to 1 megabyte.

After installation, upgrading the board to 2.5 or 4 megabytes is simply a matter of plugging in 1-megabit RAM chips into the empty sockets.

Price: $199.95.
Contact: E. Arthur Brown Co., 3404 Pawnee Dr., Alexandria, MN 56308, (612) 762-8847.
Inquiry 604.

Hercules Color Graphics Card

The InColor Card is a color version of the Hercules Graphics Card Plus. It's compatible with all standard text programs, with programs that support the Hercules monochrome graphics standard, and with programs that make use of the Hercules RamFont display mode.

The new card is capable of displaying 16 colors out of a palette of 64 in 720 by 348-pixel resolution. The board can also display any application in white on black or in any other two colors that you select. The InColor Card requires a MultiSync color monitor and meets the specifications of the IBM Enhanced Color Display.

Price: $649.
Contact: RG Electronics, P.O. Box 24138, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307, (305) 971-3823.
Inquiry 605.

PC Accelerator: Kit or Assembled

The InColor Card is a color version of the Hercules Graphics Card Plus. It's compatible with all standard text programs, with programs that support the Hercules monochrome graphics standard, and with programs that make use of the Hercules RamFont display mode.

The new card is capable of displaying 16 colors out of a palette of 64 in 720 by 348-pixel resolution. The board can also display any application in white on black or in any other two colors that you select. The InColor Card requires a MultiSync color monitor and meets the specifications of the IBM Enhanced Color Display.

Price: $649.
Contact: RG Electronics, P.O. Box 24138, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307, (305) 971-3823.
Inquiry 605.

Amber CRT for the Mac

The Amber Mac is an amber replacement CRT for the Apple Macintosh. With Italian-designed 30-milli-second long-persistence phosphors, the Amber Mac is compatible with European VDT standards and is an exact electrical and mechanical replacement for all Macintosh computers with the exception of the Macintosh II.

Detailed, illustrated installation instructions are included, and the company claims installation and adjustment takes 15 minutes. The patented “Orange Drop” tube also has special additives that reduce phosphor etching.

Price: $59.
Contact: Systems Research, 1111 West El Camino, Suite 109, Sunnyvale, CA 94087, (408) 730-5217.
Inquiry 607. continued
With Orchid's family of turbos, you can get the performance you bought a computer for in the first place. Lightning spreadsheet recalculations. CAD screens that regenerate in a flash. And large data bases that sort without putting you to sleep.

**ORCHID'S TURBO FAMILY**

<table>
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<th>Accelerator Type</th>
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<td>RAM</td>
<td>8 MB</td>
<td>16 MB</td>
<td>32 MB</td>
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**Tiny Turbo 286:**

3 Times XT Speed

Tiny Turbo 286 is also a powerful tool for developers and systems integrators. With features like an optional 10-MHz 80287 math chip, and coprocessing software for concurrent foreground/background tasks, the PC Turbo 286e lets you build minicomputer-like performance into standard PCs.

**Move Your AT Up to 386 Horsepower Now:**

Jet 386:

Take a look today at the price/performance leader in desktop computing: the Jet 386. Depending on the application, it's up to three times faster than an AT. And twice as fast as some high-performance minicomputers. Yet you don't have to buy an expensive 386-based computer to get this kind of horsepower.

More importantly, the Jet 386 uses next generation technology, the 80386 microprocessor. So you can run all of the current software for the AT now, and 386 software too. Add a Jet 386 to your AT today, and you can extend the life of your investment—for a fraction of the cost.

**Get the Editor's Choice:**

Tiny Turbo 286:

The Tiny Turbo 286 "supercharges your XT to run three times faster. Yet it's so small it takes up only half a slot in your computer. Just two reasons why PC Magazine named it the Editor's Choice.

Tiny Turbo 286 gives you a high level of compatibility. So you can run software like Lotus and Windows—with EGA graphics, EMS memory, or networking cards—at AT speed. You can even go back to your PC's regular 8088 chip, which remains in the system, giving you 100% hardware compatibility.

**Add Awesome Performance:**

PC Turbo 286e:

For power users, the front runner today in accelerators is clearly the PC Turbo 286e. It revs up to 8 times faster than an XT, or up to 2.5 times AT speed—giving you the world's fastest screen I/O. Plus the PC Turbo 286e comes factory equipped with 1 Megabyte of fast RAM, expandable to 2.

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*Inquiry 362 for End-Users.*

*Inquiry 363 for DEALERS ONLY.*

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*World Radio History*
Soft PC Provides MS-DOS Simulation on Non-Intel Processors

Soft PC from Insignia Solutions lets you run MS-DOS programs on other systems. Its CPU module reproduces the 8088's instruction operations, the effective hybrid addresses, and the condition codes.

The I/O devices module provides the interface between Soft PC and the host environment. To interact with IBM PC peripherals, the program intercepts the commands to the peripheral controllers, simulates the commands, and substitutes equivalent operations to the peripherals of the host environment.

Soft PC includes an alternate BIOS that doesn't depend on IBM code and is written in C.

Insignia Solutions reports that Soft PC is capable of running virtually all PC-DOS and MS-DOS applications, but those that incorporate timing dependencies peculiar to a real IBM PC (for example, real-time process control) can create problems. The company also reports that the speed of operations is related to the performance of the host machine, and the minimum speed provided is equal to that of an IBM PC XT.

The program runs on XTs and compatibles with an 8088 microprocessor, 1 megabyte of RAM, and a 20-megabyte hard disk drive. It also requires two RS-232C ports mapped to serial ports on the host machine. Insignia claims that because the software involves no hardware, it can run on machines with no expansion slots.

For output, you can use an IBM-compatible serial printer attached to serial ports on the host, and you can direct output to the host printer or file. The program also supports the IBM

Datalight C Compiler

Optimum-C is a global-optimizing C compiler from Datalight that analyzes a function and generates executable code based on the total view of the function. It uses the technique of data-flow analysis to gather information about the function. An optimizer phase, which is slower than the development and debug phases, is optional. During the development and debug phases, the optimizer is not used. However, it is used when you compile a production version of the program.

The compiler supports the UNIX System V C language, along with several proposed ANSI extensions, according to Datalight. Other features in Optimum-C include 8087 and floating-point support, strong type checking, ROMable code generation, a Make program, MS-DOS object files format, and compatibility with Lattice C. It includes a library that contains over 185 UNIX-compatible and MS-DOS functions, along with the source code for the library and start-up routines.

Optimum-C runs on IBM PCs with 192K bytes of free memory, a hard disk drive, and MS-DOS or PC-DOS 2.0 or higher.

Price: $139.
Contact: Datalight, P.O. Box 82441, Kenmore, WA 98028, (206) 367-1803.
Inquiry 609.

Graph-in-the-Box Application Development

New England Software's Application Development Kit for Graph-in-the-Box, a RAM-resident graph program, can be integrated into your application programs. It allows you to add 11 chart types, 10 fill patterns, 10 line types, 16 colors, exploitable pie sections, 500 observations, and 15 variables.

Price: $187.60.
Inquiry 610.

Tree-Structured Scheduling Tool

Trees-pls is a programming language that Avyx calls a resource-management tool. It was originally developed for NASA to utilize as a scheduling tool, and Avyx has adapted it to the IBM PC.

The program is a toolkit that lets you create applications for scheduling time-restricted projects. One of the program's features is its ability to manipulate tree structures, letting you use it in artificial intelligence applications. You can also use Trees-pls for scheduling, allocating resources, controlling projects, and managing information. Interfaces to graphics, C, and FORTRAN are supported.

Trees-pls runs on IBM PC, XT, AT, and compatibles with at least 512K bytes of RAM with PC-DOS or MS-DOS 2.0 or higher.

Price: $995.
Contact: Avyx Inc., 265 Honeywell Center, 304 Inverness Way S, Englewood, CO 80112-5819, (303) 790-0514.
Inquiry 611.

FORTRAN, C, and Pascal Compilers for the Macintosh II

 UniSoft's FORTRAN 77, C, and Pascal compilers for Macintosh IIIs that run Apple's A/UX operating system generate code that is 30 percent smaller and two to four times faster than other compilers.

Green Hills Software designed the compilers and UniSoft ported them to A/UX, the implementation of the UNIX System V operating system developed by Apple Computer and UniSoft.

Price: $700.
Inquiry 612.

continued
WHY LOGITECH MODULA-2 IS MORE POWERFUL THAN PASCAL OR C.

APPRENTICE PACKAGE
$99

- Separate Compilation
  - w/inter-module typechecking
- Native Code Generation
- Large Memory Model Support
- Most Powerful Runtime Debugger
- Comprehensive Module Library
- Maintainability
- Translator from Turbo and ANSI Pascal

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Return your Modula-2 Registration Card or a reasonable facsimile,* postmarked between March 1, 1987 and May 31, 1987 to be included in a once-only drawing!

Grand Prize: One week excursion for 2 in Zurich, Switzerland including a guided tour of ETH, the University where Module-2 was created by Niklaus Wirth. European customers may substitute a trip to Silicon Valley, California.

Second and Third Prizes: LOGITECH C7 Mouse or LOGITECH Bus Mouse with Paint & Draw software — a $219 value, absolutely free!

*Mime to Logitech, Inc. for a registration card facsimile.

WIZARDS' PACKAGE
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NEW!

APPRENTICE PACKAGE $99
Everything you need to begin producing reliable maintainable Module-2 code. Includes the Compiler with 8087 support, integrated Editor, Linker, and BCD Module. We're also including FREE our Turbo Pascal to Module-2 Translator!

NEW!

WIZARDS' PACKAGE $199
This package contains our Plus Compiler —for professional programmers or for those who just want the best. The Plus Compiler with Integrated Editor requires 512K and takes advantage of the larger memory to increase compilation speed by 50%. Our Turbo Pascal to Module-2 Translator is also included at no extra charge.

NEW!

MAGIC TOOLKIT $99
We've put our most powerful development tools into one amazing Toolkit for use with either the Apprentice or Wizards' packages. Highlighted by our Runtime Debugger, the finest debugging tool available anywhere, the Toolkit also includes our Post Mortem Debugger, Disassembler, Cross Reference utility and Version which keeps track of different versions of one program. Our MAKE Utility figures out module dependencies and automatically selects those affected by code changes to minimize recompilation and relinking. We also provide source code of our major library modules for you to customize—or just play with.

WINDOW PACKAGE $49
Now you can build true windowing into your Module-2 code. Features virtual screens, color support, overlapping windows and a variety of borders.

Turbo Pascal is a registered trademark of Borland International.
Two CAD Updates

**CADKEY 3.0**, from Micro Control Systems, offers a three-dimensional programming language, CADKEY Advanced Design Language, which includes three-dimensional data primitives, CADKEY command access, unlimited program size, and macro table management.

Enhanced two-dimensional drafting capabilities include the addition of ordinate dimensioning, European and English drafting standards, and fractional dimensioning.

Another addition to version 3.0 is an on-line calculator that supports trigonometric and algebraic functions. Other improvements include a unified database that lets you describe a 3-D wire-frame model, shade the model, and transmit interactively synthesized solid primitives to an engineering analysis and animation utility. You can also output vector or rasterized images to desktop-publishing programs.

CADKEY runs on the IBM PC and compatibles with 640K bytes of RAM and MS-DOS 2.0 or higher. It also requires one hard disk drive and one floppy disk drive. **Price:** $3195.

**Contact:** CADKEY Division, Micro Control Systems Inc., 27 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, CT 06066, (203) 647-0220.

**Inquiry 613.**

**Generic CADD 3.0** is 20 percent faster than version 2.0, according to Generic Software, and it offers more control over views and line types. You can choose from 10 standard line types and call out any line width. "Named views" is a new feature that lets you name a portion of a drawing displayed on the screen and later recall or plot it.

You can use Generic CADD 3.0 as a base module for a system of computer-aided design tools, including DotPlot 3.0, which lets you use over 100 dot-matrix and laser printers. AutoConvert 3.0 uses the Drawing Exchange Format, so you can exchange drawings with AutoCAD and other software using the DXF format. Auto-Dimensioning 3.0 adds dimensions, legends, extension lines, leaders, and arrows. Drafting Enhancements 1 3.0 adds solid fill and cross-hatching with standard or user-defined patterns. And the Generic IGES module lets you exchange drawings with mainstream and minicomputer CAD programs that support International Graphics Exchange Standards.

Generic CADD 3.0 runs on IBM PCs and compatibles with at least 384K bytes of RAM, MS-DOS or PC-DOS 2.0 or higher, and two floppy disk drives or one floppy and one hard disk drive. A Hercules graphics card, CGA, or EGA is also required. Generic recommends an 8087 or 80287 math coprocessor, 640K bytes of RAM, two serial ports, and a mouse or digitizer tablet.

**Price:** $99.95.

**Contact:** Generic Software Inc., 8763 148th Ave. NE, Redmond, WA 98052, (206) 885-5307.

**Inquiry 614.**

**ChemText** is a chemical document processor that lets you accent chemical structures, create reaction schemes, flowcharts, process diagrams, and create other drawings that include boxes, lines, arcs, circles, and arrows. The program is part of the Chemist's Personal Software Series from Molecular Design.

ChemText's drawing editors let you produce molecules, reactions, forms, and equations. A set of science and math symbols is included that let you build complex multilevel equations in ChemText documents. You also have the ability to insert images from other sources into ChemText documents.

Fonts include Greek, large and undersize Roman, Fraktur, European Roman, Cyrillic, and script.

It runs on IBM PC, XT, AT, and compatibles with at least 640K bytes of RAM with MS-DOS or PC-DOS 2.0 or higher. You need a Hercules graphics card, a CGA, or EGA to run the program. With the Enhanced Graphics Adapter you'll need at least 128K bytes of graphics memory. It also requires a 10-megabyte hard disk drive and a 360K-byte floppy disk drive.

**Price:** $1500.

**Contact:** Molecular Design Limited, 2132 Farallon Dr., San Leandro, CA 94577, (415) 895-1313.

**Inquiry 615.**

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**CADKEY 3.0 with three-dimensional programming language.**

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**Engineering Design**

**VersaCAD/Mechanical** is an add-on to VersaCAD or VersaCAD Design that helps you to improve productivity in mechanical-part design and automated manufacturing. The program offers you design features on a tablet overlay. Geometric tolerancing, enhanced dimensioning, and mechanical construction features are included.

Dimensioning features include ANSI Y14.5M-1982 standard dimensioning symbols. Dimensioning capabilities include limit dimensioning, which provides upper- and lower-limit dimensions, and tolerance and radial dimensioning. VersaCAD/Mechanical supports full- and small-cross-hair center lines for circles and arcs, as well as interactive leader lines for text. It also supports construction tools such as chamfers, fillets, tangents, and line stretch.

**Price:** $495.

**Contact:** Versacad Corp., 7372 Prince Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647, (714) 847-9960.

**Inquiry 616.**

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Continued
We put our money where our Mouse is.

LOGITECH C7 MOUSE
$99

PC MAGAZINE "EDITORS CHOICE"

OPTO-MECHANICAL TECHNOLOGY

BEST DEALS
We offer either our C7 or Bus mouse, with Plus software, packaged with some of the most exciting applications on the market, at very exciting prices.

LOGIPAIRNT Special Offer! $149
The LOGITECH Mouse with PC Paintbrush is the most advanced paint set available for the PC. It offers 11 type fonts, a palette of 16 colors, and the ability to import and embellish files from other applications.

LOGICADD $189
The LOGITECH Mouse packaged with Generic CADD and Dot Plot turns your PC into a complete CADD workstation. Generic CADD offers the features and performance of high-priced CADD at an unbelievably low price. Dot Plot is the add-on utility that enables you to produce crisp, high resolution drawings from your dot matrix printer.

LOGIPAINT & DRAW $219
The LOGITECH Mouse packaged with LOGIPAINT and LOGICADD. Together they are the complete graphics toolkit for combining freehand and technical drawings.

LOGITECH BUS MOUSE $149 with LogiPaint
100% Microsoft Bus Mouse Compatible!
It has all the features of the LOGITECH C7 MOUSE, plus it leaves the serial port on your computer free for other peripherals. It comes standard with our top-of-the-line Plus Software and LogiPaint.

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LOGITECH C7 Mouse w/Plus Software $119
LOGITECH BUS Mouse w/Plus Software and LogiPaint $149

Additional Software (with C7 and Plus or Bus Mouse and Plus.)
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LOGICADD $159
LOGIPAINT & DRAW $219

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In Italy:
Tel: 41-21-879656

MAY 1987 • BYTE 47
**WHAT'S NEW**

**SOFTWARE • BUSINESS AND OTHER**

**Using the Macintosh II and SE to Create Presentations**

PowerPoint from Forethought lets you create and manage presentations with the use of overhead transparencies, flipcharts, speaker's notes, and handouts. Some of the features include word-processing capabilities, diagram drawing tools for illustrations, and on-screen slide showing. It also includes a disk of predesigned formats and slide layouts. PowerPoint gives you the ability to import graphics and text from Macintosh programs, and you can use slides created with PowerPoint in desktop-publishing documents.

The program is compatible with the Macintosh II and SE and runs on other Macs that have at least 512K bytes of RAM and one 800K-byte or two 400K-byte disk drives. **Price:** $395. **Contact:** Forethought Inc., 250 Sobrante Way, Sunnyvale, CA 94086, (408) 737-7070. **Inquiry 617.**

**VCN Concorde 2.0**

Visual Communications Network's version 2.0 of their graphics program, Concorde, lets you create slide shows on-screen incorporating graphics, pictures, text, music, animation, and special effects. New to version 2.0 is the ability to create and edit your own fonts. You can also use Concorde to create charts and diagrams, interface with Lotus 1-2-3 or other spreadsheets, and run word-processing and graphics packages through Concorde's screen-capture function. The menu-driven program can exit to DOS at any time, execute another program, and then return to Concorde. **Price:** $695. **Contact:** Visual Communications Network Inc., 238 Main St., Cambridge, MA 02142, (617) 497-4000. **Inquiry 618.**

Create and edit fonts with version 2.0 of Concorde.

include the keyboard, mouse, digitizer, and scanners. Concorde 2.0 supports output devices in bit-mapped and vector-based formats. The bitmap mode enables you to print or plot images of varying complexity. The vector mode offers faster speeds, and you can obtain higher resolutions using pen devices, according to VCN. Output devices supported include film recorders, ink-jet printers, color plotters, and 24-pin color printers. The U.S. version of Concorde 2.0 is not copy-protected. It runs on IBM PC, XT, AT, and compatibles with at least 384K bytes of RAM in medium resolution and 640K bytes in high resolution. It supports CGA and EGA, along with Hercules monochrome graphics. **Price:** $295. **Contact:** Microrim, P.O. Box 97022, Redmond, WA 98073-9722, (206) 885-2000. **Inquiry 619.**

**Graphs and Charts with Microrim's R:BASE**

Using Microrim's R:BASE System V, 5000, or 4000 database-management systems with R:BASE Graphics, you can create graphics and charts. You can also graph using data from other programs by implementing the FileGateway import/export utility in R:BASE database managers. R:BASE Graphics reads R:BASE databases directly, letting you reduce the data into a graphable subset. You can run the program as a stand-alone or in a local area network environments on IBM PCs, XTs, and ATs. For single-user operation, you'll need at least 512K bytes of RAM and MS-DOS or PC-DOS 2.0 or higher. For LANs you'll need at least 640K bytes, MS-DOS or PC-DOS 3.1 or higher, and a dedicated file server.

The program supports IBM CGA and EGA, the Hercules Graphics Card Plus, the monochrome graphics card, and others compatible with Graphics Software System device drivers. You can output to a variety of plotters and printers. Other features of the program include a split-screen display that lets you display graphics in up to 32 separate windows on-screen or in your output. It has seven text fonts, and you can use up to 4 of the 14 colors at a time in EGA- or CGA-display mode. **Price:** $285. **Contact:** Microrim, P.O. Box 97022, Redmond, WA 98073-9722, (206) 885-2000. **Inquiry 619.**

**StatView II**

StatView II is a Macintosh II and SE version of the statistics program StatView 512 + from BrainPower. Enhancements to the program include a color capability and the ability to support multiple screen sizes. You can also customize your graphs by scaling them to any size and choosing text color, font, style, and point size for text placement within the graphs. According to the company, the program takes advantage of the Mac II's 68881 coprocessor in its calculations and provides the ability to address up to 2 gigabytes of RAM. **Price:** $450. **Contact:** BrainPower Inc., 24009 Ventura Blvd., Suite 250, Calabasas, CA 91302, (818) 884-6911. **Inquiry 620.**

WHERE DO NEW PRODUCT ITEMS COME FROM?

The new products listed in this section of BYTE are chosen from the thousands of press releases, letters, and telephone calls we receive each month from manufacturers, distributors, designers, and readers. The basic criteria for selection for publication are: (a) does a product match our readers' interests? and (b) is it new or is it simply a reintroduction of an old item? Because of the volume of submissions we must sort through every month, the items we publish simply a product match our readers' interests? and (b) is it new or is it a product match our readers' interests? and (b) is it new or is it simply a reintroduction of an old item? Because of the volume of submissions we must sort through every month, the items we publish
TEKTRONIX NEW ADVANCED PC GRAPHICS STANDS ALONE.
BECAUSE IT WORKS TOGETHER.

Introducing Tek Advanced PC Graphics: a fully integrated system of high-performance graphics, easy system connectivity, and unparalleled application software for your PC. Tek Advanced PC Graphics starts with a flexible multiple-rate color graphics monitor that provides 640x480 Tektronix-style graphics as well as EGA and CGA software compatibility.

Driving your monitor to a whole new level of graphics speed is Tek's PC4100 graphics coprocessor board. It features Texas Instruments' powerful TMS 34010 32-bit.
Graphics System Processor (GSP), the graphics coprocessor board achieves a combination of sophisticated graphics and fast throughput your PC just couldn't deliver before. The GSP assumes the complete graphics processing workload, freeing your PC processor for other requirements.

To bring those applications to life, you can connect a Tek color ink-jet printer. And start producing high-resolution, vibrant hardcopy output on either paper or transparencies.

Couple all that with Tektronix worldwide support and service, and your PC can gain the same productive advantages that host-based systems in scientific and engineering environments have had for close to two decades.

Tek's PC4100 graphics coprocessor board delivers serious graphics on a stand-alone basis. Built around the Texas Instruments Graphics System Processor (GSP), the coprocessor board achieves a combination of sophisticated graphics and fast throughput your PC just couldn't deliver before. The GSP assumes the complete graphics processing workload, freeing your PC processor for other requirements.

New companion monitor brings together fine detail and maximum flexibility. You'll view your applications on Tek's new multiple-rate monitor. In true Tek tradition, it provides ideally balanced, 640x480 addressability and a 60 Hz non-interlaced refresh rate. So you can use advanced packages like AutoCAD, Zenographics' Mirage and VersaCAD.

Then, to move from GSP graphics to emulation of the IBM Enhanced Graphics Adapter (EGA) mode, you simply soft-switch. And you're ready to run the popular PC packages you probably already use in CGA/EGA mode—standards like Lotus 1-2-3, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Windows, to name just a few.

Last, but not least, Tek's PC4100 links you to a world of mainframe graphics. All you do is load Tek PC-05/PC-07 terminal emulation software. Because Tek PC-05 and PC-07 terminal emulation software runs under MS-DOS 2.0 and higher, you can run your mainframe-based...
applications software on your PC as if it were a Tek 4105 or 4107 terminal.

Which means you can quickly access the power of Tek graphics—including 4107 segments, true zoom and pan, rubber-banding, definition of up to 64 viewports and more. You can use these highly productive features with a wide range of well-known designer software packages such as ISSCO's DISPLA and TELL-A-GRAPHTM, MCS's ANVIL-5000, SAS Institute Inc.'s SAS/GRAPH, Precision Visuals' DI-3000, Swanson Analysis Systems' ANSYS and McNeal-Schwendler's NASTRAN.

In addition, you can utilize software development tool sets like Tektronix PLOT 10, GKS, IGL, TCS and STI software as well as numerous driver support packages created for the 4105 and 4107.

Completing the picture: perfect color output with Tek's reliable ink-jet printers. At the push of a button, the Tek 4696 lets you produce exacting color reproductions of your on-screen display on either paper or transparencies.

Because of its 120 dots per inch addressability in both horizontal and vertical directions, you can achieve resolution of up to 1280 points x 960 points per "A" size image.

All the key tools for software development, right from the outset. The new Tektronix Graphics Interface (TGI) for the PC provides the basics of Tek graphics functionality to application programs running under MS-DOS. What's more, in-circuit emulator, C-compiler, assembler and linker are all available from Texas Instruments to help software developers write applications packages for the PC4100 graphics coprocessor board.

To enable sufficient workspace for custom interfaces or specific application programs, the PC4100 graphics coprocessor board comes standard with a full megabyte of program memory.

Put yourself on the sure path of Tek graphics evolution. Whether you choose Tek PC stand-alone graphics, Tek's high-resolution monitor, Tek terminal emulation or all three, you can be assured Tek will keep you current with the best and most productive graphics. Because like all our products, Tek Advanced PC Graphics features a smooth built-in pathway to higher-level graphics.

For more information about how Tek lets you stand alone and work together, contact your local Tek representative about Tek Advanced PC Graphics. Or call, 1-800-225-5434. In Oregon, 1-235-7202.
EVENTS AND CLUBS

May 1987

EVENTS

Lighting & Optics for Machine Vision, Boston, MA. Joanne Rogers, Program Administrator, Special Programs Division of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, One SME Dr., P.O. Box 930, Dearborn, MI 48121, (313) 271-1500, extension 399. May 5-6


Atari Trek '87, Seattle, WA. Atari Trek '87, 2442 North West Market St., P.O. Box 97, Seattle, WA 98107, (206) 232-3009. May 16-17


Introduction to Artificial Intelligence and Expert Systems, El Segundo, CA. UCLA Extension, 10995 Le Conte Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024. May 18-22


If you send notice of your organization's public activities at least four months in advance, we will publish them as space permits. Please send them to BYTE (Events and Clubs), One Phoenix Mill Lane, Peterborough, NH 03458.

CLUBS

MED Journal, the journal of the Medical Electronic Desktop; c/o JAM Software Pty. Ltd., 27A Nowanrie St., Summer Hill, Australia NSW 2130.

The Communications Connection News, The Information Exchange, 3825-I South George Mason Dr., Falls Church, VA 22041.

PolyLetter, the newsletter for PolyMorphic systems owners and users; 191 White Oak Rd., Williamstown, MA 01267, (413) 458-8421.


Prolog Users Group (PUG), Jack Ellis, 2252 Main St., Suite 15, San Diego, CA 92011, (619) 423-0538.


Mensa MacNews, Mensa MacSIG, P.O. Box 11626, St. Paul, MN 55111-0626.

A SNOBOL's Chance, c/o Catspaw Inc., P.O. Box 1123, Salida, CO 81201, (303) 539-3884; BBS: (303) 539-4830.

Computers in Education, Macaulay Rd., RD2, P.O. Box 119, Katonah, NY 10536.

Macintosh Users Group, c/o Kinell, Pilgatan 15, 90245 Umea, Sweden.

Rattlesnake Atari Computer Enthusiasts (RACE), Skip Leininger, 2110 Strand, Missoula, MT 59801.

National Capital Macintosh Club (NCMC), Paul Lardner, P.O. Box 5685, Station "F," Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2C 3M1, (613) 236-6262.

Computer Users of Texas, c/o Patrick Girmsdor, 516 52nd St., Lubbock, TX 79404, (806) 762-3131.

ARK: Amiga Users Group, c/o Howard Couch, 512 Stonewall Dr., Suite 120E, Jacksonville, AR 72076.
Desktop Publishing Terms

A standard measure for type size is the em, named for the width of the 'm' which is usually the widest letter in a typesetter's character set. The size of a typeface is always given in point size. Where you're setting a line in 12 point type, an em is 12 points wide.

Related to the em is the en, which is equal to half the width of an em or the width of the letter 'n'. The third space is the non-defining unit, smaller than an em, and is used as an adjustment between letters to improve readability. The process, called kerning, is determined by the shapes of the individual letters. In electronic publishing, typographic orifice shoes are imprinted by embedding codes within the page data. A hyphenation and justification program then interprets the codes and makes the line-ending decisions.

Because the letter blocks were originally made out of lead alloy, the vertical space between lines of type was 12 points. The origin of the em is lose. The em is a unit of measure used in typography, and is equivalent to the width of the letter 'm'. The en is half the width of an em, and is used to adjust the spacing between letters to improve readability.
Now, desktop publishing software of such genius, you don't have to be a 'Leonardo' to use it.

Until now, if you were in the IBM PC world and wanted to join the desktop publishing revolution, the software was hard to use, expensive, and often rewarded you with documents that were technically correct, yet visually disappointing.

Enter Xerox genius for creating perfect documents and a new generation of desktop publishing software—Xerox Ventura Publisher. It combines the best of current page-oriented systems with the best of document-oriented systems to make desktop publishing easy as well as productive.

The special genius of Xerox Ventura Publisher is "stylesheets"—20 built-in formats that arrange text and graphics automatically. Choose a stylesheet (or create your own), combine your text and graphics, and Xerox Ventura Publisher goes to work at the amazing rate of 20,000 characters per second, formatting as many as 64 100-page chapters. Most other programs format a page at a time, just like the cut-and-paste process you're escaping.

It's easy. You manipulate text and graphics with a mouse. What you see is what you get when you print. (Buy a new Xerox full-page display, and you won't have to scroll to see your entire page layout.) Make a change on page 1 and before you can say "Leonardo da Vinci," the entire document reformats. Tables of contents, indexing and numbering of pages, sections, tables, captions and figures are automatic.

Unlike most other programs, Xerox Ventura Publisher runs on a standard IBM PC XT/AT or compatible—AT power is not required. Text can be created on, and converted from, most major word processing programs. Graphics can be imported from many graphics and paint programs—even scanned images are easily incorporated. It supports dot matrix, color ink jet and laser printers as well as PostScript printers and typesetters.

What price genius? The money you'll save by producing your very first 16-page booklet instead of sending it out will probably cover the cost of your very own Xerox Ventura Publisher software.

Xerox brings out the genius in you.

Xerox Corporation, PO. Box 24, Rochester, NY 14692.

Begin your career as a desktop publishing "Leonardo" by stopping in at any computer store featuring Xerox desktop publishing software, by calling your local Team Xerox sales office or 1-800-TEAM-XRX, ext. 143B.
ASK BYTE

Conducted by Steve Ciarcia

Home Study
Dear Steve:
Most of the articles in BYTE are beyond my technical ability. I have tried other magazines, but their articles are considerably beneath my competence.
Could you please indicate a recommended reading list or, better yet, a good home study program in electronics and computers?

Alfred W. Thompson
Shrewsbury, MA

I have always had respect for the Heathkit series of home study courses, in both electronics in general and computers. You might even have one of their stores near to you, so a check in the phone book might be rewarding. If not, they would be happy to send you a catalog. They advertise heavily in hobbyist electronics magazines like Radio-Electronics, with postage-paid reply cards for convenience.

Because there are so many books on so many aspects of computers and electronics, I find it hard to recommend any specific text, especially since I am not completely sure of your level of understanding. What I can recommend heartily is The Reader's Guide to Microcomputer Books, by Michael Nicita and Ronald Petrusna, published by Golden-Lee, 1000 Dean St., Brooklyn, NY. This 400+ page book is a review of hundreds of books—covering mostly software books, but some hardware books as well. A half- to full-page review plus a numerical rating within categories make it easy to find books that will meet your needs.

Hands-on experience is always helpful. Many community colleges offer beginning computer and/or electronics courses in the evenings. Books are great, but human beings usually answer questions a lot better. — Steve

Mystery Machine
Dear Steve:

I am in great need of information on two subjects:
First, could you direct me to any information on Vector Graphics computers? I have been picking up bits and pieces at the swap meets with the goal of putting together a working computer.
Second, I have a mystery computer that I hope you can help identify. Following is a list of its features:
- It is manufactured by Bi-M Instrument, Houston, Texas.
- The unit is approximately 12 by 24 by 6 inches, enclosed in an aluminum chassis with provisions for a vertical wall mounting. It is labeled Model 1600 A.
- The unit is composed of two circuit boards. The top board is labeled “CPU computer”; the bottom board is labeled “Video Computer Z-80B.”
- There is no enclosed power supply. The required 5, 12, and 24 volts come in through an amphenol connector. The 24 V is for a muffin fan.
- Along the right side of the computer are ports labeled: channels 1-5 RS 232 DB 25 ports, serial keyboard DB 9 port, channel 1-2 HDLC DB 15 ports, parallel I/O DB 25 port, light pen DB 9 port, coax connector for RGB video, and peripheral expansion 60-pin ribbon connector.

The two PC boards are connected by a ribbon cable. I do not know what HDLC stands for. The upper CPU computer board is marked as assy. 8-14-0024C. Overall, the unit is high-quality; my guess is that it's from a commercial arcade video game.

Wade Bjerke
San Juan Capistrano, CA

Vector Graphics was one of the larger S-100 manufacturers in the late 1970s, but the company is no longer in business. You can get much of the information you need from one of the many S-100 hardware books and a CP/M book. The best approach, however, is to find someone using a Vector Graphics system in your area.

Your Bi-M computer is not from a video game. HDLC is the acronym for IBM's High Level Data Link Control protocol, a protocol for mainframe-to-intelligent peripheral communications using a byte-synchronous signaling technique. The light pen and RGB connectors indicate that it is to be connected to an RGB monitor, probably of fairly high resolution. I would try to power this unit up, and see what signals are present at the video connectors. If you don't have an RGB monitor, sync is likely to be present on the green output, and this is likely to be an RS-170 analog video signal rather than the more common TTL of today. I'm sorry that I don't have any more information. By powering up the system and also dumping the contents of the ROMs on the CPU board, you could learn a lot about this unit. — Steve

Desperately Seeking Chip Set
Dear Steve:

Some years ago, I saw some Intel information on a processor chip set they called the iAPX432. The processor was a high-level object-oriented chip. I have been unable to locate any information on this chip set. Where can I write to find out more about the iAPX432? Are you aware of any computers assembled using this processor? My interest was sparked by the processor's resemblance to IBM's System/38 processor.

Mike Calabro
Schenectady, NY

The iAPX432 chip set is still alive. The original version of this chip set was not a good performer, but the revised version stands up remarkably well against a 12-MHz 68000. The language it was designed for is ADA. The remarkable thing about the architecture of object-oriented computers is that you can hook several of them together to boost performance without any reprogramming.

IN ASK BYTE, Steve Ciarcia answers questions on any area of microcomputing. The most representative questions received each month will be answered and published. Do you have a nagging problem? Send your inquiry to

ASK BYTE
P.O. Box 582
Glastonbury, CT 06033
Due to the high volume of inquiries, we cannot guarantee a personal reply, but Steve and the Ask BYTE staff answer as many as time permits. All letters and photographs become the property of Steve Ciarcia and cannot be returned.

The Ask BYTE staff includes manager Harv Weiner and researchers Eric Alberi, Bill Carlew, Ken Davidson, Jeannette Dejan, Jon Elson, Roger James, Frank Kuechmann, Dave Lundberg, Tim McDonough, Edward Nisley, Dick Sawyer, Andy Siska, Robert Stek, and Mark Voorhees.
Writing Faster Macro Assembler Programs

Fast execution speed is probably the biggest advantage a program can have—and the Microsoft Macro Assembler is the language of choice for writing the fastest programs. Our software engineers would like to give you a hint that can make your fast Macro Assembler programs even faster!

If you need to take the absolute value of a number held in the AX register, try this method:

```
cwd ; replicate the high bit into DX
xor ax, dx ; 1's complement if negative, no change if positive
sub ax, dx ; AX is 2's complement if it was negative
```

The standard absolute value method works on any register but is much slower:

```
or bx, bx ; see if number is negative
jge notneg ; if it is negative
neg bx ; make it positive
```

```
notneg: ; jump to here if positive
```

This fast method achieves part of its speed by avoiding the use of a jump instruction to keep the 8086's pre-fetch queue full. The 8086 always tries to fetch the next instruction from memory while it is processing the current instruction in order to save time while a program is running. A jump instruction, however, moves the location of the next instruction to fetch, making the instruction that the 8086 just fetched into its pre-fetch queue invalid. This forces the 8086 to spend time fetching the correct instruction from memory after the jump. Whenever possible, avoiding jumps will increase the execution speed of your Microsoft Macro Assembler programs.

New Microsoft COBOL Version Includes Symbolic Debugger, Cross-reference Generator, and Other Utilities

Microsoft COBOL Compiler Version 2.2 now includes COBOL Tools which was formerly sold as a separate package at a suggested retail price of $350. This powerful set of productivity aids minimizes coding time and reduces the cost of program development and maintenance. Both the MS-DOS® and XENIX® 286 versions of the compiler packages have been updated. Microsoft COBOL now includes ViewCob, the most intuitive, interactive symbolic debugger for COBOL on the market; CobRef, an advanced cross-reference generator; Menu Handler, an innovative utility to enhance your Microsoft COBOL applications with a menu-oriented user interface; and CbMouse (only in the MS-DOS version), an object module to interface the Microsoft Mouse to your applications.

ViewCob has an easy-to-learn, menu-driven interface similar to that of Microsoft Multiplan! It supports multiple windows for viewing source code, program execution history, breakpoints, and memory locations while your program is executing. Powerful execution control, breakpoints, and tracing provide the programmer with a tool for analyzing all aspects of a Microsoft COBOL program. Modify any data-item at any breakpoint to test different conditions in your program without cumbersome data input or recompilation. Trap runtime errors. In some cases (e.g., non-numeric data), you can correct the situation and continue execution. On-line help messages are available for descriptions of command functions and general operational procedures.

CobRef allows the COBOL programmer to cross-reference source code listings to data-items, files and procedure calls in a program. In addition to name and type, listings include details on where an item is defined and referenced.

Menu Handler provides a program skeleton for creating applications with a menu-oriented user interface that is similar to the interface for the popular Microsoft Multiplan. Entries in the command area are mapped to the procedure calls in your Microsoft COBOL application.

CbMouse object module is linked to the program runtime. It translates the COM.P-O data-items defined by the programmer into the format that the mouse system calls are expecting. It converts the pixel values needed by the Microsoft Mouse to row/column values used by COBOL without the application needing to go through the conversions.

For more information on the products and features discussed in the Newsletter, write to: Microsoft Languages Newsletter 16011 NE 36th Way, Box 97017, Redmond, WA 98073-9717.

Latest DOS Versions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft C Compiler</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft COBOL</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft FORTRAN</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microsoft Macro Assembler</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microsoft Pascal</td>
<td>3.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microsoft QuickBASIC</td>
<td>2.01</td>
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Microsoft, the Microsoft logo, MS-DOS, XENIX and Multiplan are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation.

Look for the Microsoft Languages Newsletter every month in this publication.
The chips in the set are called the 43201 (CPy), 43202 (MMU), and the 43203 bus interface.

Do you have any suggestions on how to hook the new backplane and power supply to the clone's bus?

I recently purchased a cabinet, eight-slot backplane, and power supply to make an expansion box for my IBM clone. When I hooked the clone's bus directly to the backplane with a ribbon cable, however, my computer would not even display the monitor prompt.

Do you have any suggestions on how to hook the new backplane and power supply to the clone's bus?

The IBM Hardware Technical Reference Manual shows one way to connect an expansion box. The description is in Chapter 1 under “Expansion Unit.” They use a driver card in the main unit expansion bus, a receiver card in the expansion box, and a shielded cable that carries all bus signals except OSC (the clock). The expansion box has its own power supply and clock oscillator, and a wait state is inserted to allow for lack of synchronization between the main and expansion unit clocks.

Logic diagrams, which are almost complete schematics, are also included in the Technical Reference Manual’s Appendix D.

This is not the only way to interface the units. If you use a very short cable, you are very careful about noise, and use proper termination, you might be able to carry all the signals.

A card with a set of buffers on each end may also work, but your experience shows why IBM suggests a driver/receiver card combination.

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Do you have any suggestions on how to hook the new backplane and power supply to the clone’s bus?
HOT GRAPHICS PACKAGE
FOR C PROGRAMS: $ 39.95

Everything you need to write dramatic graphics effects into your Eco-C88 C programs. Some of the features include:
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*Requires Eco-C88 C Compiler.

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• Custom window titles and borders
• Can be used with ANSI device driver
• Most of window's code-data lies outside small model limits
• Use any of the IBM text or block characters
• User's examples and manual

The Windowing Library requires an IBM PC compatible BIOS and the Eco-C88 C compiler.

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With all the recent hoopla over performance, it’s ironic how much attention is being given to the cursor. Ever since, if not before, the computer industry changed to using 80x25 character displays, developers have been aware of the problem of keyboard input delays, due to the extra time delays required for refreshes. And yet, the low-speed keyboard response has gone unnoticed — and not just in the world of home computers. At the other end of the spectrum, the professional workstation/graphics-oriented computer, refresh delays are even more critical, yet, not much has been done about them.

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If you use 1-2-3, Symphony, dBASE, Reflex, or Paradox, you need Cruise Control’s Anti- Skid Braking. Here’s what the leader of one Lotus users group said about Cruise Control:

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Cruise Control’s namesake feature takes the drudgery out of paging through data base records, long documents, and large spreadsheets. It lets you repeat any key, hands-free — at the speed of your choice.

And there’s more. A Chronometer lets you type the time or date into your application at the current cursor position. The keyboard-controlled Screen Dimmer protects your privacy. The programmable Auto-Dimmer extends the life of your display screen.

Comparing to thousands of today’s popular programs, including Lightning, SuperKey, Ready! 2, and Ready! 3, Cruise Control is a RAM disk. The HD64180 seems like the perfect answer, and your design of the SB180 in combination with the Z-System seems to be what I am looking for.

Southern Pacific offers an HD64180 board for the Kaypro, but it uses CP/M Plus rather than the Z-System, and your account of the capabilities of the Z-System have sold me on it. I wonder if the Z-System can be used with a board other than the SB180?

My only regret about the SB180 is that it doesn’t use the full 512K RAM that the chip is capable of addressing, but I can see that it would take a larger board to accommodate the added memory chips.

Wendell J. Fay
San Diego, CA

I am not familiar with the Southern Pacific HD64180 board for the Kaypro, but I do know that Echelon, Inc., the company that wrote ZCPR3 and the rest of the Z-System software, does have a RAM expansion card for the SB180. Their address and phone number are:

Echelon Inc.
885 N. San Antonio Rd.
Los Altos, CA 94022
(415) 948-3820

A newer, more powerful version of the SB180 is now available. Called the SB180FX, it supports a larger RAM disk (up to 4 megabytes with a new memory expansion card) and has a SCSI hard disk interface on the main circuit board.

Also, I am interested in MIDI; what register and crystal values would let the Z8671 microcontroller’s serial I/O port run at MIDI’s 31.25K bps? Any input you can offer would be appreciated.

Matthew Taylor
Austin, TX

Striking Out Alone

Dear Steve:

I have recently been considering starting a custom programming business. As a result, I would like to obtain some information that could help educate me on all of the trials and tribulations that would be in store for me, as well as give me hints on streamlining such an operation.

—Roy Anderson
Long Beach, CA

The first principle of consulting (that’s what you’re getting into, even though you may think of it as custom programming) is that free advice is worth every penny you pay for it.

I have to make a few assumptions:

• You are starting out as a one-man operation.
• You are pretty competent at writing code.
• You have a moderate amount of get-up-and-go.

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As for streamlining your operation, I think the best advice is not to make things too complicated in the first place. You can probably keep your finances in a single-entry register and business checkbook. You won’t need a fancy accounting system right away. Because the whole tax situation has changed, all of the old wisdom about incorporating is wrong, so beware of free advice about your business structure (even from me!). —Steve

Multiprocessing PC

Dear Steve,

I am trying to decide whether to use an IBM PC XT in a multiprocessing mode using a program like Microsoft Windows, or an IBM PC AT using a multiuser operating system such as XENIX. What is your suggestion?

Harvey Horn
Flushing, NY

The main problem with XENIX is that it’s pretty much a turkey on an XT and only mediocre on an AT. Also, it really doesn’t function as a real-time operating system. Finally, everything you think you know about PC software will change; you’ll have to get software that runs under XENIX rather than PC-DOS... and such software isn’t cheap, either.

Microsoft Windows gives the illusion of concurrent operation, but in reality it’s not quite as nice as they would have you believe. For example, applications with an active window are time-sliced, but applications represented by an icon are not (with the exception of the clock application, which is a special case). The Windows Development Kit ($500) gives you the programming tools to write code to run with Windows, but from what I’ve heard, the I/O interrupt handling isn’t pretty.

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THE BEAUTY OF FRACTALS:
Images of Complex Dynamical Systems
Heinz-Otto Peitgen and Peter H. Richter
Springer-Verlag
New York: 1986
ISBN 0-387-15851-0
199 pages, $35
Reviewed by:
Eric A. Bobinsky

Anyone with an interest in fractals, computer graphics, mathematics, physics, art, or philosophy will find The Beauty of Fractals: Images of Complex Dynamical Systems a synthesis of the meaning of fractal geometry in each of these distinctive domains.

Written by Heinz-Otto Peitgen, a mathematician, and Peter Richter, a physicist, both professors at the University of Bremen, the book is the outgrowth of a 1984 exhibition of fractal art and its underlying mathematics. The authors had previously produced a brochure to accompany an exhibition called “Harmonie in Chaos und Kosmos,” which served as a catalog of the fractal art and as an intelligent layman’s explanation of its scientific foundation. From that first show sprang an international exhibition called “Frontiers of Chaos,” which The Beauty of Fractals was written to accompany.

Three Potential Audiences
This book is, in a way, a three-in-one volume. First, it is a “philosophical physics” treatise, since the authors don’t hesitate to relate fractal geometry to the nature of the universe, and they offer an exciting glimpse into new areas of science opened up by the development of fractal mathematics.

Throughout the opening chapters, the book stresses the importance of nonlinear processes in natural systems and, perhaps more important, that the long-term state of a given system (the stability of the solar system at some future date, for example) can’t necessarily be determined by the initial values of its parameters. To quote from the book: “It is true that our spaceships can trust Newton’s laws of motion and modern computers to guide them to their goals, but the fact remains that the route becomes unpredictable over very long periods of time.”

Second, this is a very well illustrated mathematics textbook. Although it is not, as the authors state, mathematically rigorous, it is nonetheless rich in equations and mathematical notation. But those readers who are either uncomfortable with or uninterested in the mathematical sections can simply skip them without missing the flavor and the impact of the text and its accompanying illustrations (see the example above).

Third, this is a book for computer programmers, particularly those “renaissance coders” whose interests tend to range over the frontiers of both science and technology.

Acknowledging the Computer’s Role
The authors acknowledge the assistance of two university computing departments and several programmers in the production of the graphics for the book, and they have returned the favor to the programming community at large by providing a sound mathematical and algorithmic treatment of fractal geometry. The last few pages of the book, titled “Do It Yourself,” contain several fundamental algorithms, along with commentary, that can be programmed easily on a small computer.

Early on, the authors bring up the fact that this book—and, in fact, the entire field of fractal geometry—owes its current state of development to the computer. “Where scientists of earlier generations had to simplify their equations drastically or give up

continued
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**BOOK REVIEWS**

These protocols have been designed by computer vendors for use by their largest customers, transparently providing high-speed access for dozens (or hundreds) of computers.

Those with a single microcomputer and a modem have largely been ignored, even when their goals are far less ambitious. As an ASCII serial communications protocol for transferring files over a line or an RS-232C cable, Kermit provides an answer for the hobbyist, student, or small businessperson.

Kermit was originally designed by da Cruz and Catchings, but later enhancements came from a dialogue with its users. The latest extensions are designed for use with the current crop of high-speed modems and transmission through packet-switched networks.

Kermit has two advantages over other ASCII serial protocols: First, it was designed to run on many computer systems; and second, it is completely public and nonproprietary.

A valuable section of the book contrasts Kermit (the protocol) with another public domain microcomputer protocol, Ward Christensen's XMODEM/MODEM7, independently designed at about the same time. However, unlike the CP/M bias of XMODEM, Kermit has been successfully implemented on a wide range of microcomputers, workstations, and mainframes.

As independent software vendors crack the compatibility problem, they lock up their solutions in proprietary data protocols. In contrast, Columbia University has not only placed the specification of the Kermit protocol in the public domain but has freely distributed the source and object code for the several dozen programs that support it. By doing so, Columbia has performed a valuable educational service for the entire computer science community. As the sole participant at Columbia to remain from day one until the present, da Cruz is uniquely qualified to bring this project to the general computer public.

**Levels Outlined in the Book**

Kermit has three levels of target readers. The first such reader is the user of Kermit programs who may also be interested in the primer on data communications. The second is the local Kermit professional who supports such users. The third reader is someone who is writing a communications program that supports the Kermit protocol and who needs answers to specific questions.

A technical writer always faces a dilemma in trying to combine an easy-to-understand text with one that is technically detailed and precise, and the disparate audience makes the task even more difficult here. Da Cruz has done much better than most by addressing these distinct goals in separate sections. Wittry drawings by George Ulrich enhance the book's light tone.

The goals and history of the Kermit effort include walks through several representative file-transfer sessions. Unfortunately, a published book in this field is a fixed snapshot of a moving target or, in this case, of the many evolving targets of the 42 different supported computers. The tutorial cannot list all possible systems or combinations and thus cannot supplant the specific, up-to-date documentation supplied by Columbia with each program. The documentation problem is made only slightly less grim by the use of a common command interface in many Kermit programs. It is doubtful, then, that any Kermit user would plunk down $25 solely for the first 45 pages of this book.

Goals are followed by a primer on computers and serial communications. The novice should find it a reasonable introduction to these topics. For the experienced programmer, the most interesting sections document the differences in file formats for a variety of computers.

Next, a reader's reference guide includes a complete description of the command interpreter developed by Columbia for the DECSYSTEM-20 implementation and used by many Kermit programs. When used with programs that feature this inter-
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Kudos to Columbia
Anyone not already familiar with Kermit (the program) should seek out a copy. Due to the efforts of those at Columbia and elsewhere, the programs are free and readily available from several user groups. Heavy users of Kermit, and those who must support such users, will find the book a valuable reference. It’s essential for anyone writing a terminal program.

Dampening My Enthusiasm
The book has a number of weaknesses. The C example is the most portable implementation at Columbia, but the choice of C is unfortunate: Pascal programs are generally more readable to C programmers than vice versa. Although the use of short (five- and six-character) identifiers is proposed as a virtue for portability to archaic compilers, it is unnecessarily cryptic for a teaching example. The example also follows every trick for compactness in a C program at the expense of readability.

Despite the author’s preeminent experience with Kermit (the programs), the book seems biased toward those programs where he has firsthand knowledge. The interest in the now-obsolete DEC-20, for example, seems to be to the detriment of its popular VAX/VMS cousin. The discussion of how to test a new program under IBM protocol converters may be important at Columbia, but it has little relevance to a developer hooking an Amiga to a UNIX box.

Finally, as da Cruz self-mockingly notes, the book is part “political tract” and part “polemic.” Whether he’s arguing against selling software or apologizing for the sexism of “male” and “female” labels on DB-25 connectors, da Cruz’s infrequent diatribes grow tedious. His admonitions against military uses of Kermit seem particularly ironic when considering that the network sponsored by DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) has greatly facilitated Kermit’s distribution.

MAC INSIGHTS and THE POWER USER’S MANUAL
Reviewed by Bonnie L. Walker

The authors of both Mac Insights and The Power User’s Manual set out to write a comprehensive source of hints, tips, and shortcuts for using the Macintosh. If you are looking for a collection of tidbits about the Mac and its most popular...
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BOOK REVIEWS

software, either book will probably suit your needs. There are, however, a few differences between the books that may help you select the best one for you.

MAC INSIGHTS

Mac Insights is written by Lon Poole, the "get Info" columnist for Macworld magazine. His book consists of information that has appeared in his column and pointers he has gleaned from other publications, experts, and user groups. The tips are arranged by topic: troubleshooting, hardware hints, word processing, communications, and so on. Information about specific applications is located under appropriate topics. For example, under Word Processing you'll get tips about both MacWrite and Microsoft Word.

TOPICAL ARRANGEMENT

Within each main grouping, the subtopics are not arranged in any particular order. For example, under the main topic Word Processing, Poole begins with a subtopic called Getting Around, in which he discusses the insertion point, followed by Keyboard Navigation and Place Markers. Under Place Markers, he suggests typing an unusual symbol and using FIND to locate the markers later. Under Selecting, he explains how to select lines, sentences, phrases, and paragraphs.

Throughout the book, Poole's emphasis is often on creative or commonsensical ways to use an application rather than on technical tips. Scattered among the practical tips, however, he does include some valuable technical tips such as the one that appears under the heading "Converting Documents." Here Poole explains how to remove unwanted return characters from an entire document using Microsoft Word, a situation that often occurs when transferring files from one computer to another.

More often though, Poole gives us information on how to use a particular application. For example, he explains in detail how to accommodate printed letterheads. "If your letter is only one page long," he writes, "the easiest and most reliable method of accommodating a letterhead in MacWrite is to insert the appropriate number of blank lines above the text of the letter." Under the topic Editing, Poole's subtopics are so specific that only he would be able to find information in this book if he needed it. Examples are saving often to avoid clogging memory, efficient correction when typing, and restoring backspaced text. Another topic in this category is evaluating phrasing options. Fortunately, the book has a detailed index that helps to bridge the gap.

One of the best sections in Mac Insights is Resources. Poole provides detailed instructions on using ResEdit. He explains how to change a font, personalize an icon, and change Get Info comments, among other hints. More than 50 tips on graphics make the Graphics section among the most useful. The section provides detailed instructions on using ResEdit. He explains in detail how to remove unwanted return characters from an entire document using Microsoft Word, a situation that often occurs when transferring files from one computer to another.

About 50 applications are mentioned.

One of the best sections in Mac Insights is Resources. Poole provides detailed instructions on using ResEdit. He explains how to change a font, personalize an icon, and change Get Info comments, among other hints. More than 50 tips on graphics make the Graphics section among the most useful. The section provides detailed instructions on using ResEdit. He explains in detail how to remove unwanted return characters from an entire document using Microsoft Word, a situation that often occurs when transferring files from one computer to another.

THE POWER USER'S MANUAL

The Power User's Manual was commissioned by MacUser magazine, in which author Randal Kottwitz's "Tip Sheet" column appears. Kottwitz also likes descriptive titles rather than generic ones, but since he has organized his book somewhat differently from Mac Insights, it's not as difficult to locate specific facts. The book begins with a section titled General Information and proceeds to group tips by application or hardware item, starting with Finder, Macintosh, and Macintosh Plus.

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The Power User’s Manual and Mac Insights both have fairly detailed indexes. Neither book has very many illustrations, although both contain lots of little icons.

Ingredients of Tip Books
To my way of thinking, a book of tips should offer information that is not in the applications’ manuals. It might also include information that is in the manual but that is likely to be overlooked. A tip book should contain new ways of using applications that most people would not think of on their own.

Both these books follow that prescription, but both have significant flaws in organization, content, and clarity. Both books would benefit from a glossary of terms and a heavier emphasis on technical details, like a list of Finder versions and their specific characteristics, for example. Both would be improved by including more screen dumps from the applications they discuss.

Poole and Kottwitz have included as much current information as possible, given publishing constraints. There is a considerable amount of information about the Mac Plus, for example, in both books. One important piece of software was not included in either book, however: Microsoft Word 3.0 may well revolutionize word processing on the Mac. It will undoubtedly result in the need for new editions of both of these references.

Bonnie L. Walker, an independent consultant in Bowie, Maryland, is an instructional design specialist and systems analyst.

Balance of Power: International Politics as the Ultimate Global Game
Reviewed by Rick Grehan

Chris Crawford is a designer of games noted for their unparalleled depth of perception. His latest creation—Balance of Power—is no exception. The game, about geopolitical interactions in the nuclear age, runs on the Macintosh. You play the role of either the President of the United States or the General Secretary of the Soviet Union. The computer plays the head of the opposing superpower. One goal of Balance of Power is to make it through to the end of 1994 alive, without engaging in a nuclear exchange. Another goal is to have as many powerful countries respecting your country as possible. The game refers to this latter accomplishment as prestige—the sum of the degrees to which countries show affinity to yours, weighted by their military strengths.

First a Game, Then a Book
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**BOOK REVIEWS**

forces. Within each of the chapters that define the game's ingredients, we are provided with a description of the real-world effect the author is attempting to simulate, a discussion of the algorithms he used, and several historical scenarios of events associated with the chapter's material. These historical outtakes demonstrate the author's meticulous research.

**The Game's Design**

Sprinkled throughout the book are the details of the author's efforts in designing the game. This is not Crawford's first publication on the subject: His earlier work is called The Art of Computer Game Design: Reflections of a Master Game Designer (Osborne/McGraw-Hill, 1984). The author reveals that this effort is composed not only of a series of additions, but more often requires the deletion of materials whose selection is derived painfully (and rarely scientifically). Particularly intriguing is the description of the feedback loop that evolved as Crawford developed the game. The act of representing (or attempting to represent) the intricacies of world geopolitics actually improved his understanding of them so much that he was able to redirect this new understanding into constructive modifications of the game.

**What's Missing**

As wonderful as this all sounds, the author himself points out important components missing from the game. In fact, he devotes an entire chapter to "The Unincluded Factors," the most important of which is the game's simple, bipolar view of the world (it ignores the potential emergence of China, for example, as a nuclear superpower).

Most omissions to the game, however, occurred either in response to the lack of resources (primarily memory, often time) or in an effort to make the game less overwhelming and more approachable.

Players of the game certainly appreciate its sophistication and would expect that software of such complexity was formulated using the latest development equipment. Yet it is interesting to read that the wonderfully detailed map of the world that is Balance of Power's primary screen was originally drawn freehand onto graph paper and laboriously entered into the Macintosh by hand.

Programmers who may find themselves considering year-long stints before a display screen in an effort to produce the next great computer-game blockbuster will find the chapter entitled "How Balance of Power Was Created" particularly interesting. It details the false starts, economic pitfalls, and other sordid details that might send even the best flowcharted plans of a formative game over the brink.

**The Last Straw**

Finally, the designer confronts his own creation in the appendix. Crawford plays a sample game and leads us through a step-by-step account of the action, particularly the activities below the surface. Most revealing is the author's analysis of his own miscalculations. We must stand in some awe of a program that puts its own designer into serious deliberations.

Balance of Power is a joy to read. Crawford is witty, lucid, and overflowing with ideas. The book is full of deep and often disturbing insights, such as the author's original proposal for the game: "I intend to show that good men can still annihilate the world through miscalculation."

You needn't be a computer programmer to read this book. However, if you are and you are interested in simulation or game design, you will find Balance of Power absorbing.

Rick Grehan is a BYTE technical editor. He can be reached at BYTE, One Phoenix Mill Lane, Peterborough, NH 03458.
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Features

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by Jonathan Erickson, G. Michael Vose, and Charles Weston

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Build BERT,
the Basic Educational Robot Trainer,
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An Adventure Authoring System
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Inquiry 92

5200 West Century Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90045 (213) 645-1082
The Tandon PAC 286

An AT-class computer with a unique disk subsystem and memory management unit

Editor's note: The following is a BYTE product preview. It is not a review. We provide an advance look at this new product because we feel it is significant. A complete review will follow in a subsequent issue.

Of all the innovative technology that drives the personal computer business, none moves faster than new disk technology. Tandon Corporation, a company built on disk technology, recently developed a disk subsystem featuring portable hard disk data packs. To sell these unusual new disks, the company built an AT-class computer called the PAC 286 that uses the removable disk drive/data packs and incorporates a custom memory mapper chip to give the computer access to memory above the MS-DOS 640K-byte boundary.

The PAC 286 (see photo 1) sells for $2995. Personal Data Pacs (PDPs) cost $300 to $400 each (see the In Brief box on page 86 for a full description of the configurations of the PAC 286). A PAC 286 machine comes with two data pack receptacles, providing a total of either 30 or 60 megabytes of on-line storage capability. Data packs weigh 2¼ pounds and can fit easily into a briefcase. PDPs are self-contained 15- or 30-megabyte hard disk drives with one or two 3½-inch platters and their read/write heads.

For now, PDPs can be used only in the Tandon PAC 286, although Tandon plans to offer add-on/add-in devices for existing IBM PC-, XT-, and AT-class machines later this year.

System Description
The Tandon PAC 286 features an Intel 80286 microprocessor that runs at either 6 or 8 megahertz. The machine uses a custom clock generator/bus controller with a 48-MHz oscillator. An MS-DOS software switch lets you select a processor speed that is either 1/6 or 1/8 of the oscillator frequency.

You can back up the 80286 with an optional 80287 math coprocessor for additional floating-point calculation speed. The PAC 286 features both real and protected mode operation and uses a 24-bit address bus and an 8- or 16-bit data path.

The microprocessor uses a single wait state to interface to the standard 1 megabyte of on-board, 150-nanosecond RAM. With the addition of an optional RAM expansion board, motherboard RAM can be increased to a total of 5 megabytes. This RAM expansion board attaches to the CPU board via a special 60-pin connector and therefore does not use up any of the machine's expansion bus slots. (Tandon offers this expansion board in both a 1-megabyte and a 4-megabyte configuration.) You can expand total system RAM to 16 megabytes by adding additional memory cards into the expansion bus slots. In addition, the PAC 286 uses a

Photo 1: The Tandon PAC 286.

Jonathan Erickson and G. Michael Vose are BYTE senior technical editors. Charles Weston is a BYTE technical editor. They can be reached at BYTE, One Phoenix Mill Lane, Peterborough, NH 03458.
Photo 2: Personal Data Pacs for the PAC 286 computer.

TANDON PAC 286

Company
Tandon Corporation
405 Science Dr.
Moorpark, CA 93021
(805) 523-0340

Price
$2995

Microprocessor
Intel 6-/8-MHz 80286, 16-/32-bit microprocessor

Main memory
1 megabyte, expandable to 5 megabytes with optional piggyback memory expansion board

Disk memory
360K-byte or 1.2-megabyte MFM-recorded floppy; two 15-megabyte RLL 2-7-recorded Personal Data Pacs with 50-ms access time (Model 15); two 30-megabyte RLL 2-7-recorded Personal Data Pacs with 50-ms access time (Model 30)

Keyboard
Detachable 101-key AT-style keyboard

Ports
9-pin serial port; 25-pin parallel port

Slots
One 62-pin XT-compatible slot; four 98-pin AT-compatible slots

Optional peripherals
80287 math coprocessor
2- or 4-megabyte piggyback board with up to 4 megabytes of RAM
Expansion box
Mouse

proprietary memory mapper chip that lets the machine access all 16 megabytes of memory in the real address mode (see below).

Two 32K-byte by 8-bit EPROMs contain the ROM BIOS for the PAC 286. The ROM is mapped to the top of the first and last 1 megabyte of the address space of the memory installed in the machine (hexadecimal OF0000 and FF0000).

The PAC 286 uses two 8237 direct memory access controllers cascaded to provide seven DMA channels with 16-bit data transfers permissible only through channels 5 through 7. In a similar arrangement, two 8259A interrupt controllers provide 15 levels of programmable system interrupt and one nonmaskable interrupt. In all, the PAC 286 CPU board comprises 29 chips—not counting memory parts—including five gate arrays.

The PAC 286 can be expanded even further through the use of an optional expansion box that is attached to the computer via a 100-pin printed circuit board edge connector. The expansion box can house an additional three PC, XT, or AT expansion boards, provides room for two additional half-height fixed disk drives, and is powered by its own power supply with cooling fan.

Since the PAC 286 is an AT-compatible computer, it uses the standard variety of PC, XT, or AT display adapters, from 320 by 200 monochrome output to CGA/EGA/PGA capability. The floppy disks read and write IBM-format disks. The machine uses MS-DOS 3.2 as its operating system. The PAC 286 differs substantially from AT-class computers, however, at the hard disk level.

The Personal Data Pac
From outward appearances, the one thing that sets the Tandon PAC 286 apart from other personal computers is a unique mass storage system built around 15- and 30-megabyte PDPs. Technically, a PDP is a removable hard disk, but after using one for a while, you begin to realize that it is much more than “just another hard disk.” PDPs, which are fully interchangeable within a system and between systems, let you quickly, easily, and safely take your entire computing environment—productivity programs, data, memory-resident utilities, languages, macros, and so on—wherever you go. This has far-reaching implications for those who can or must use more than a single PC, are concerned about data security or data protection, or want to prevent software piracy. Additionally, each PDP has a unique software-coded serial number that permanently differentiates it from every other PDP in existence. This, too, offers many opportunities that haven’t been possible before, as we’ll discuss later.

Of course, removable, transportable mass storage devices have been around for some time, but the problem with them has been that they are too delicate, time-consuming to back up, and expensive to be useful for much more than archiving data. PDPs change all that. Because of their unique design, PDPs provide the most rugged PC hard disk storage environment—removable or stationary—available today. While you can’t “slice it and dice it,” a PDP can withstand far greater abuse than the typical PC user would ever think about subjecting a storage device to. Backing up data isn’t a chore with PDPs either, since it takes only about 2½ minutes to copy 30 megabytes of information. And at only $350 to $400 per 30 megabytes, PDPs may be one of the biggest data storage bargains anywhere.

A PDP (see photo 2) is a rectangular plastic box with a raw hard disk assembly. It measures 2½ inches high by 4½ inches wide by 7 inches deep and weighs approximately 2¼ pounds. Three edges of the PDP are squared, while one edge (the lower left) is angled to prevent the PDP from being inserted upside-down or backward into its receptacle, the PDP equivalent of a floppy disk drive. The PDP does not have disk access lights; these are on the receptacle units. Once the PC is powered up and under system control, a PDP is self-loading in that once you insert the PDP into the receptacle part way, a slide grips the bottom of the pack to pull it all the way into the receptacle, where a 36-pin male connector (I/O, power, etc.) on the back of the PDP mates with a connector at the rear of the receptacle. A motor then aligns and engages the disk. The insertion/ejection process is similar to that of a Macintosh disk, al-
though PDP insertion/ejection is smoother. By removing the plastic case (and possibly voiding your warranty), you can see that a PDP's main internal components are a Tandon Model 383 hard disk unit, a printed circuit board with an attached 36-pin connector, and a solenoid, all fastened within a metal cage by four rubber shock mounts.

Like other hard disks, a 30-megabyte PDP has two double-sided platters with four read/write disk heads, while a 15-megabyte unit has a single double-sided platter with two heads. Whenever the PDP is not loaded into a receptacle, the disk platters and disk heads (and ultimately the data) are protected by a unique head-locking mechanism and process. This process, referred to as end unloading, gets under way when the system receives a PDP ejection command. The first thing that happens is that track 0 is identified so that the disk heads can be parked away from the directory track. Once track 0 is located, the disk heads move in 220 tracks, the 12-volt solenoid then moves a one-of-a-kind plastic comb (also called a separator fork, the main physical component of the locking mechanism) between the individual head stalks (the arms to which the heads are attached), and the heads move out 151 tracks and finally step out 69 more tracks.

Once in position, this comb holds the disk heads away from the surface of the platters and supports the head stalks. It is this mechanism that keeps the disk heads from banging against the disk platters as the PDP unit is moved about. The entire unloading and ejection process takes about 7 seconds. When a PDP is inserted into a receptacle, head loading (which is the reverse of the process described above), activates.

Currently, the PDP head unloads only as part of the PDP ejection process. As long as the PDP is loaded in the receptacle, it is susceptible to the same shock dangers as standard hard disks. Tandon will include a utility for head unloading without PDP ejection in production units of the PAC 286. You cannot remove a PDP from the receptacle except under system control after an eject command is issued. (In other words, there is no "poke hole" as found on the Macintosh.) This feature prevents a PDP from being removed without first locking the head and comb mechanism. The only way to manually eject a PDP is to remove the back cover of the receptacle unit and disengage the PDP by hand. If the power suddenly fails, there is no way to remove the PDP from the receptacle unless you remove the back cover. In most cases, this will not be a problem since the PDP becomes, in effect, a conventional, stationary hard disk and should be treated as such. It may be an inconvenience, however, if you have grown used to the convenience or necessity of moving the PDP from one system to another for portability or security.

According to Tandon specifications, a PDP can withstand shocks of greater than 250 Gs or "a [flat] drop of 18 inches onto a rigid surface (such as concrete covered with vinyl tile) without sustaining functional damage." (Tandon defines functional damage as "either the case is damaged such that the PDP cannot be loaded into the receptacle or that data cannot be recovered.") Furthermore, Tandon claims that if a PDP has dropped and lands on any edge or corner, functional damage will not occur. Drops onto softer surfaces obviously can be made from greater heights.

The data transfer rate for PDPS is 7.5 megabits per second with a maximum access time of 100 milliseconds and an average seek time of 50 ms. Due to caching on the disk controller board, actual drive performance is greater than the specifications indicate. (Since a read/seek operation is performed between each read/write, the PDP is faster on reads than it is on writes.) Additionally, track 0 has been located in the middle of the disk to enable faster data access.

Each platter in both the 30-megabyte and the 15-megabyte PDP has 615 cylinders, while a 30-megabyte unit has 2448 tracks and a 15-megabyte PDP has 1224 tracks. Since RLL (run length limited) encoding is used on the disk controller board to physically format the unit, each PDP has 26 sectors with 512 bytes per sector. If some sectors have defects, their headers can be rewritten and reassigned to specially reserved sectors at the physical end of each track.

When compared to MFM encoding techniques, RLL encoding, which is emerging as the predominant approach to putting data onto hard disks, enables both a higher data transfer rate (1.5 times greater) and higher storage capacities. In this case, RLL data-encoding techniques enable Tandon to take a current-generation 20-megabyte hard disk design with minor modifications and allow it to be reformatted for 30 megabytes of capacity. RLL improves on conventional encoding schemes (including MFM) because it represents a binary data string as a data encoded pattern without separate clock or data bits (as does MFM encoding), hence there are fewer flux reversals and faster transfer rates.

In addition to supporting RLL encoding, the disk controller, which is controlled by the 80286 CPU through the BIOS, also features 56-bit error correction coding (ECC) with the ability to recover bad sectors, consecutive disk sector reads and writes without interleave, full-track read buffers for random sector access, and the ability to relocate sectors on a track.

The disk controller is physically housed on two printed circuit boards; one board contains digital components, and the other contains analog components (we'll cover this in more detail later). In addition to supporting the PDP drives, the disk controller also provides support for two standard ST-506 fixed disk interfaces. The components on the digital board include a control processor, a RAM buffer controller, DRAM, a digital multiplexer (for selecting between PDP or ST-506 devices), a phase comparator, a CMOS LS1 disk controller chip, and the ST-506 interface. The disk controller chip performs most of the data transfer functions by accepting command and status signals from the CPU to provide the appropriate controls for both the ST-506 and PDP interfaces, including head select and I/O transfer. The disk controller also contains RLL encoding and decoding logic and error detection and correction logic.

Caching, or buffering, on the controller board is accomplished by a least recently used (LRU) buffer management process. When a request for caching is sent to the controller board, the BIOS first looks to see if the sector demanded is already in the cache. If the sector is in the cache, it is transferred from there to the user space, and access returns to the disk. If the request isn't satisfied, the system goes out and finds an available buffer. If a free cache buffer is available, the system just takes that buffer. If all buffers are used, then the system finds the oldest buffer and uses it. The total cache is 128K bytes in size, roughly divided among eight buffers.

The RAM buffer controller enables the PAC 286 to avoid using system RAM for continued...
The 80286 Problem

The Intel 80286 microprocessor suffers from what can best be described as a conceptual design flaw that hampers its use in protected virtual address mode. Programmers discovered that doing context shifts between real mode and protected mode was not a trivial task. The placement of the T-bit and the permission bits within the address/segment word (see figure A) required register manipulation of the address portions of this word before any address translation arithmetic (virtual, or logical, addresses to physical addresses) could be accomplished.

Because of the position of these non-address bits, simple 32-bit arithmetic for calculating addresses is not possible in 80286 protected mode. (See listing 1 for a pseudocode description of the 80286 virtual address calculation process.) Programs written for the 80286 and PC-DOS therefore require some significant manipulation of the address segments to be able to run in 80286 protected mode.

As you can see from figure A, only 14 bits of the value loaded into the segment register are significant. Therefore, segment register values less than 4 bytes from each other point to the same descriptor table entry.

In another approach to this problem, the descriptor table is programmed to zero, which causes a descriptor table limit exception. The operating system then recovers from the exception and calculates the physical address. It takes a significant amount of time, beginning at the exception caused by loading a segment register, to trace back through the various pointers and tables to figure out the value that should be loaded into an 80286 equivalent segment register during a context shift. A descriptor table must then be created with this value as its base. (To allow for any value to be loaded into a segment register, the descriptor table would have to be 64K bytes in size.)

This problem caused programmers to be reluctant to modify existing 8086 code to make it compatible with the 80286. In addition, if the operating system was modified and succeeded in multiple sector reads/writes, thereby letting the disk access the 128K-byte sector buffer through a local DMA channel or directly through an address port dedicated to the host processor. The RAM buffer also contains DRAM refresh circuitry.

The limitations placed on the RAM buffer are dictated by the software control module, which divides the RAM sector buffer into four blocks. Two of the blocks are designated read/write track size blocks, one for each PDP. This effective-ly prevents more than two PDPs from being used in the initial PAC 286 system. The third block is used by the verify track size command, while the fourth block is the control block. Each read/write track buffer contains storage for each sector on a track as well as track identification.

The analog board basically performs two functions: PDP receptacle control and actual drive control. All electronics are on the analog board, not inside the drive. This helps keep down the cost of individual PDPs. The analog board components include the receptacle motor drivers for loading and unloading the PDPs, an analog multiplexer for selecting RLL-encoded data, a pulse detector with filter and automatic gain control for converting PDP data to digital pulses, a drive position control processor, stepping and spindle motor drivers, and two gate arrays for controlling head movement (track placement and step and direction sequencing). The drive position control processor is interfaced to the system bus via a parallel port used to transfer status

---

**Listing 1: The pseudocode for the 80286 virtual address calculation process.**

Adding a displacement of 16 bits or less: (offset in DX, displacement in AX)
- Add new displacement to DX.
- If carry-out then
  - Move DS into BX.
  - Add '0008' to BX.  (Add 1 to index field.)
  - Move BX back into DS.

Adding a displacement of more than 16 bits: (offset in DX, displacement in BX:AX)
- Add new displacement of DX.  (DX < — DX + AX)
- Add carry-out to BX.
- Left-shift BX by 3.  (Align with index field.)
- Move DS into CX.
- Add CX to BX.  (Add displacement high to index field.)
- Move CV back into DS.

---

**Figure A: The placement of the T-bit and the permission bits within the address/segment word on the Intel 80286.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bit</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>Offset within the segment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**8086 address and 80286 real-mode address formats**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bit</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>RPL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field:
- Index: Index of the segment descriptor within the selected descriptor table specified by the T-bit
- T-bit: Table indicator (global versus local address space)
- RPL: Requested privilege level (used in the 80286's protection scheme)
- Offset: Offset within the specified segment

**80286 virtual address format**

This problem caused programmers to be reluctant to modify existing 8086 code to make it compatible with the 80286. In addition, if the operating system was modified and succeeded in
making programs compatible, address manipulation during context shifts could take hundreds of microseconds or more, compared to tens of microseconds or less for a Motorola 68000-type microprocessor. This factor would slow down the operating system drastically and degrade system performance.

In protected mode the 80286 protects segments of coresident processes by marking them as execute-only or read-only. The 80286 provides four levels of security (0 to 3), designated by the bits that make up the RPL field within the segment selector words. This system is normally secure, allowing programs to access any segment with a numerically higher (or less secure) privilege level. The real problem occurs when an application tries to execute subroutines that are part of the operating system (normally the highest level of protection). These code segments should be protected from possible damage, but less privileged applications should still be granted access to them.

The mechanism used for this purpose is the descriptor gate, a passageway to a more privileged level of code. The gate has a privilege level that is separate from the code segment to which it points. A descriptor gate with a privilege level of 3 can point to a code segment with a privilege level of 0, for example. Thus, a lower-level application can issue a call through the gate and the CPU will alter (raise) that application’s privilege level temporarily, while it executes secure operating system code.

When the return instruction is executed, the application’s privilege level is once again lowered to its original level. All in all, this is a complicated scheme, and it has not achieved great popularity among software developers.

and commands for drive position control and PDP loading and unloading. The signals from the controller are used by the RAM buffer controller and the data controller (both on the digital board) for translating the commands/status into signals to be sent to the disk drive interface for read/write chain, stepping motor, and spindle motor control. The drive position control processor also monitors the PDP, seeking, recalibration, and loading in addition to interrupt sourcing.

When you receive a PDP, it is prefor-

**TANDON PAC 286**

matted and configured with one partition that contains the operating system and utilities.

**The Memory Mapper**

PDPs are not the only unique hardware in the PAC 286. Tandon engineers also tackled the inability of the Intel 80286 to perform smooth context shifts between protected mode and real mode by developing a memory mapping device (see "The 80286 Problem" at left).

Tandon’s engineers have not solved the 80286 protected mode problem, but they have found a way to work around it. In Tandon’s scheme, the processor is not intended to run in protected mode at all. This machine can still run programs written for protected mode, but when it is in this mode, the same context-shift problems are still present as in any normal PC AT.

To avoid these problems, the processor is intended to run in real addressing mode all of the time, and the memory mapper/page register chip and the internal DMA registers control the remapping of memory for the three new operating modes—clone mode, mapped-clone mode, and extended mode. The on-chip DMA page registers were added to support DMA operations for the three addressing modes.

The memory mapper/page register chip serves three functions: mapping all addresses generated by the CPU into the physical address space, a DMA/page register mapping function that extends the addressing range of the DMA channels, and an interrupt redirection function for remapping system interrupts. Note that the memory mapper and DMA page register functions are separate and share only the silicon of the chip.

**Clone Mode**

In clone mode, the machine is like any other PC AT, with one exception. Memory between 640K bytes and 1 megabyte is not normally accessible on a PC AT. Tandon remaps this 384K-byte chunk of RAM, using hardware on the motherboard, so that it always appears above the highest address of any add-on memory present. (This function is not to be confused with the functions of the memory mapper/page register hardware.) The Setup menu checks the amount of RAM present when the machine is configured and reports where this chunk of bonus memory resides.

In clone mode the processor is capable of running protected mode programs, like any other PC AT, with all its attendant problems. All virtual memory address calculation is handled by the processor itself, and no memory mapping of any
kind, other than the hardware relocation of the 384K bytes just mentioned, takes place. The DMA registers are configured exactly as they are in an IBM PC AT (see the clone-mode addressing scheme in figure 1).

**Mapped-Clone Mode**

The PAC 286 powers up in clone mode, with the memory mapper turned off, and then the mapper must be turned on by some software, such as Tandon's memory management software. In this configuration (referred to as mapped-clone mode), the processor is operating in real address mode and has access to a full 16 megabytes of memory through the use of the memory mapper’s two groups of 64 mapping registers. The processor has the ability to select either 64-register set when executing a context shift, which greatly speeds up the process (see the mapped-clone addressing scheme in figure 2). One set of registers is dedicated to the operating system memory map, and the other set is used for the memory map of the current task.

All addresses presented to the DMA controller in this mode are below 1 megabyte and are considered virtual addresses. Processor address bits 14 through 23 are all seen by the mapper hardware. In this mode, if bits 20 through 23 are zero, virtual address translation is necessary. Bits 20 through 23 do not always have to be zero, but if they are not, the mapper is bypassed for that one bus cycle.

Bits 14 through 19 are used by the mapper to select a DMA register, and that DMA register supplies translated address bits 14 through 23. These bits make up the actual physical address derived from the virtual address. This translation allows the processor, in Intel real address mode with the mapper turned on, to have access to any of 64 16K-byte pages within the full 16 megabytes of physical addresses rather than the 1 megabyte normally available to the PC AT in Intel real address mode.

**DMA Page Registers**

The memory mapper chip also contains the DMA page registers used in all three addressing modes. There is no hard logical connection between the memory mapper and the DMA page registers. Either can be enabled independently of the other, depending on the addressing mode desired.

IBM PC ATs employ seven DMA channels. Channels 0 through 3 are 8-bit data channels, channels 5 through 7 are 16-bit data channels, and channel 4 is used to cascade channels 0 through 3 to the microprocessor. These channels normally transfer data in 128K-byte blocks throughout the 16-megabyte address space, but transfers can be any size, limited by the channel’s address space of 64K bytes for byte DMAs and 128K bytes for word DMAs.

Each DMA channel normally has a DMA page register associated with it. Clone mode uses one register per channel and decodes it into the I/O location that corresponds to the standard AT register for that particular channel.

In mapped-clone mode the address contained in the DMA page register is translated by the mapper the same way the processor addresses are translated by the mapper. In other words, in mapped-clone mode the page registers contain a virtual address that is translated by the mapper into a physical address, just as a CPU virtual address would be. DMA operations will view memory space the same way that the processor does, allowing DMA transfers to extended memory.
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<th>B. Short card. 256K Video memory, runs color/mono display, 16 color, 640 x 350 resolution, and with Hercules emulation</th>
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<td>Q. IBM AT Bus Extended Card</td>
<td>R. IBM AT Bus Expanded Card</td>
<td>S. 20 MB $365 $425</td>
<td>T. XT HD/Floppy Controller</td>
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<td>U. AT HD/Floppy Controller</td>
<td>V. AT HD/Floppy Controller</td>
<td>W. IBM AT Bus Expanded Card</td>
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Extended DACK signals

DMA page registers 41 x 10

Contents of page register

(A14..A23) Byte

(A14..A23) Word

8237 DMA controller

Selects page register

(A14..A15) Byte

(A14..A16) Word

(A0..A13) Byte

(A1..A13) Word

Figure 3: The extended-mode addressing scheme used by the memory mapper.

Table 1: Benchmark results for the Tandon PAC 286.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sieve</th>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Savage</th>
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<tr>
<td>IBM PC (BASIC)</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>891</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBM PC (QuickBASIC 2.0)</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandy 3000 8 MHz (OB 2.0)</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>34.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandon PAC 286 8 MHz (OB 2.0)</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo 3: The interior of the PAC 286 system unit.

without having to change the values in the DMA page registers.

DMA Page Register Extended Mode

The DMA page registers can operate in an extended addressing mode. In this mode, 41 10-bit DMA page registers are used, one for each 16K-byte block of addressable memory per channel. Four registers are used for each of the 4-byte DMA channels, eight registers for each of the three Word DMA channels, and one register is dedicated to refresh cycles.

Eight-bit DMA channels (0 through 3) decode address bits 14 and 15 to select one 16K-byte block out of a 64K-byte block of addresses. Sixteen-bit DMA channels (5 through 7) decode address bits 14, 15, and 16 to select one of eight 16K-byte blocks from a 128K-byte block of addresses. Extended-mode addressing allows the DMA controllers to address any 16K-byte block within the total 16-megabyte physical address space (see the extended-mode addressing scheme in figure 3). These extra registers allow DMA operations to the noncontiguous memory space that results from memory mapping operations.

Interrupt Redirection

When the memory mapper is enabled, it watches for the 80286 to read an interrupt vector as a result of a hardware interrupt request. When the mapper detects a hardware interrupt, it disables itself temporarily during the interrupt vector fetch. This assures that all hardware interrupt vector fetches occur from physical page zero of the system rather than from the logical page zero.

Compatibility and Performance

We tested a prototype PAC 286 computer for compatibility and performance. The results of the standard BYTE Sieve and Calculation benchmarks, plus the Savage benchmark, are summarized in table 1.

The prototype machine shows obscured access to expansion slot J5 (see photo 3). Slot J2 contains the video adapter, and slot J4 holds the dual-board disk controller. Therefore, only slots J1 and J3 can be used for memory expansion or accessory boards. Cabling from the disk controller to the disks is not long enough to allow replacement of the disk controller to another slot.

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Video technology has always interested me. One look at all the monitors, TVs, and displays around my house suggests that it goes deeper than interest. Freudian views aside, this is not the first time I have covered video technology in a Circuit Cellar project. In previous articles, I have described high- and low-resolution video display systems and even a low-cost digital camera. However, the one project I’ve always wanted to do has eluded me. Until now, I have had to hold off on the presentation of a cost-effective general-purpose high-performance gray-scale video-digitizing “frame grabber.” I’ll explain this later, but the key terms for the moment are “gray scale” and “frame grabber.” Such terms usually indicate commercial units costing thousands of dollars.

While some video digitizers are designed as peripherals for specific computers, virtually all digitizers enliven and involve significant trade-offs in performance to maintain low cost. Generally, their digitizing speed is significantly less than the rate necessary to capture a video image as it is transmitted in real time (1/30 to 1/60 second). Instead, they must repeatedly sample many sequential video frames. Digitizers like these—sequential field scanning digitizers—can deal only with stationary objects in front of a camera and can take as long as 30 seconds to scan and record an image. Such digitizers are useless if you are working with moving objects.

Another factor to consider is how a digitizer represents the intensity of each pixel. Most low-cost digitizers meet the minimum video display capabilities of their host computer and digitize each element only as black or white. Some allow a limited gray scale. Higher-performance digitizers offer 64 or more levels of gray scale as well as a high digitizing speed. Fortunately, both static memory and video integrated circuit technology have progressed to the point where I can finally offer a project that attempts to meet the level of perfection I have outlined. For the next two months, I will describe a complete digital video system. You can use it independently as a video camera digitizer and display (to implement a video telephone, for example), or you can connect it to any personal computer for tasks like image processing, character recognition, and desktop publishing graphics.

ImageWise consists of two separate boards: a digitizer/transmitter and a display/receiver. Each board can be used independently, or they can be connected to form a complete digitizer/transmitter/receiver system (see photo 1).

In contrast to other digitizers, ImageWise is a true frame grabber that takes only 1/60 second to capture an image. It accepts the video signals from devices like a standard TV camera (either monochrome or color), VCR, laser disc player, and camcorder, and it then stores the picture as 244 lines of 256 pixels with 64 levels of gray scale—256 by 244 by 6 bits (see photo 2). The ImageWise digitizer/transmitter board converts the stored video image to RS-232 serial data that can be transmitted to any computer or to the ImageWise display/receiver board. Transmission rates are selectable from 300 bits per second up to 57.6 kbps.

The specifications of the digitizer/transmitter board are

- Resolution: Same as above.
- Video input: 1-V peak-to-peak, black and white or color, 75-ohm termination.
- Serial output: RS-232, 1 start bit, no parity. Transmission rate is selectable from 300 bps to 57.6 kbps.
- Hardware: 8031 microprocessor, RCA CA3306 6-bit flash A/D converter, 64K bytes of static video RAM.

The specifications of the display/receiver board are

- Resolution: The three selectable resolutions are 256 by 244, 128 by 122, and 64 by 61. All resolutions support 64 levels of gray scale (each picture element is represented by 6 bits). Note that, regardless of resolution, the system displays all pictures as interlaced full-screen images. Lower-resolution images are composed of larger pixel blocks.
- Video output: 75-ohm, 1.5-volt peak-to-peak composite video.
- Serial input: RS-232, 8 bits, 1 stop bit, no parity. Transmission rate is selectable from 300 bps to 28.8 kbps.
- Hardware: 8031 microprocessor, Telmos 1852 video D/A converter, 64K bytes of static video RAM.

The author of several books on electronics, he can be reached at P.O. Box 582, Glastonbury, CT 06033.
Today’s Class: TV Basics 101
Although there may be a few folks tucked away in odd corners of the country who don’t have a TV set, I think it’s safe to say that everyone who reads BYTE has at least seen a TV picture at one time or another. While most TV is color TV these days, I’ll describe only monochrome (black-and-white) TV signals because that’s what ImageWise uses. The circuitry required to digitize and reconstruct color TV signals is considerably more complex than seemed reasonable for this project. Fortunately, the color video standards include monochrome as a subset, so we can use color cameras and monitors as well.

Figure 1 shows a simplified diagram of the process used to build an image on a TV monitor. An electron beam is scanned horizontally across the screen, starting from the upper left corner. It is moved downward after each line, and the result is a set of lines scanned left to right and top to bottom filling the screen. After scanning the last line, the beam is returned to the upper left corner to begin scanning the next screen.

The faceplate of the screen is covered with a phosphor that glows when struck...
by the electron beam and continues to
glow even after the beam passes on. Be-
cause the entire screen is scanned rapidly
enough to get the beam back to each spot
before the phosphor glow fades out, the
entire screen seems to be illuminated at
once.

One key difference between a TV
display and most computer CRT displays
is that the electron beam in a TV set can
take on a wide variety of intensities, rang-
ing from completely off (black) through
shades of gray to completely on (white).
A computer display may allow only
black, one shade of gray, and white.
We'll see what this difference means a lit-
tle later on. Most composite video input
amber or green monitors also have some
gray-scale (or should I say green-scale?)
capability.

As you might expect, the actual details
are a bit more involved. A TV screen is
scanned twice for each image, with the
two sets of scan lines interlaced on the
screen (computer displays are generally
noninterlaced). This allows the whole
screen to be scanned in half the time a
noninterlaced scan would take, without
reducing the number of lines in the
image. Figure 2 shows how interlaced
scanning paints lines on the screen. Each
vertical scan is called a field, and two
matched fields make up a frame.

One field is completed in 1/60 second.
There are 262.5 lines in each field (see
figure 2 to locate the half lines), so each
line must be scanned in 63.5 microseconds
(1/60 second divided by 262.5).

Figure 3 illustrates the signal voltage sent
to the display for a single scan line, along
with the allowable times for each part of
the waveform. (Note: By strict definition,
ImageWise is a field rather than frame
grabber, since it digitizes only the first
244-line field of an interlaced frame.
However, since the term frame grabber
has come to mean a digitizer with the
speed to digitize within the time period of
a video frame, I shall continue to use the
term frame grabber.)

The horizontal sync pulse occurs every
63.5 µs and tells the monitor to end the
current line, return to the left edge, and
begin another line. Surrounding each
sync pulse is a blanking voltage that en-
sures that the track of the retrace will not
be displayed on the screen. After allow-
ing time for retrace and blanking, about
52 µs are left for the actual video picture
on the horizontal scan line.

A vertical sync signal tells the monitor
when to end the current field, return to
the top of the screen, and begin the next
field. Because the two fields in each
frame are offset by exactly half a line, the
timings at the end of each field are slight-
ly different. Figure 4 diagrams the analog
voltage required to display a complete
field. To keep the size of the diagram
down, only the first and last lines of ac-
tive video are shown. The horizontal
scale is distorted so that you can see the
details.

You should note that the horizontal
continued
sync pulses do not stop during the vertical sync and retrace. In fact, to make sure that the monitor switches smoothly across the half line, sync pulses occur every 31.75 μs during most of the vertical sync period.

A blanking voltage surrounds the vertical sync pulse itself to ensure that the vertical retrace is not visible on the screen. Each field contains 244.5 visible lines, which you can verify by examining the timing diagram in figure 4.

Although video monitors can tolerate small variations in the number of displayed lines or the exact line timings, any errors will be immediately visible as jitter or distorted images. The sync voltages and timings must be exact to ensure a stable picture. The worst offense is to have timings that vary "just a little" from field to field; this will cause the picture to jitter annoyingly.

Variations on a Theme
Now that you’re acquainted with standard video, I can explain some of the basic design criteria for ImageWise. As with any project, there are trade-offs between "the ultimate system" and "the one that got built." I will try to explain why I made the decisions I did.

The most basic question was one of resolution: How many picture elements (pixels) should appear on each line? A single pixel corresponds to the smallest unit of video information handled by the system. Computer monitors typically have 300 to 1000 pixels per line. With about 50 μs available in each line to display those pixels, a 1000-pixel line requires a new pixel every 50 nanoseconds. Since typical dynamic RAMs have a cycle time of 300 ns, allowing a few nanoseconds for the other circuitry would require about eight banks of RAM to ensure that a pixel was ready every 50 ns. Using 50-ns static RAMs, while feasible, would be very expensive.

I decided to look at it the other way: How many pixels will fit on a line with affordable hardware? We find that 32K-byte static RAMs are increasingly affordable, and they are considerably faster than DRAMs. Since even the "slow" ones have a cycle time of about 130 ns, one pixel every 200 ns is reasonable. That allows 256 pixels in 51.2 μs. Be-
cause 256 is a “magic” number, I knew I was on the right track.

As I mentioned earlier, each field has about 244 visible lines. Therefore, a 64K-byte buffer could hold one field with some room left over. Two fields could be contained in 128K bytes. With two fields, however, the vertical resolution (488) is twice the horizontal resolution (256).

This seemed excessive. Fortunately, because both fields often contain redundant information, I decided to keep the amount of RAM within reasonable bounds and digitize only a single field. But how would a 256- by 244-pixel picture look compared to the original?

All my experience with 320 by 200 computer displays suggested that I might not like the results and be forced to go back to expensive plan A. However, seeing is believing, so I figured I’d build it and decide then. (Often it is easier and faster to build a prototype and take a look at the results than to argue about what might be.)

Photo 3 shows the quality of the image I got with a 256 by 244 display. (So much for my prior experience with computer displays!) There’s a good reason why I was wrong, and if you’re as surprised as I was, here’s the explanation.

You see jagged diagonal lines or “jaggies” on low-resolution computer displays because each pixel can have only a few levels of brightness. The jaggies can be reduced only by increasing the number of pixels on each line. Depending upon the subject material, resolutions of 640 pixels per line and 350 to 400 lines per screen are required to see noticeable improvement.

But there is another way to reduce the jaggies: If each pixel can take on many levels of brightness, the sharpness of the edges can be reduced. ImageWise uses 6 bits to represent each pixel, allowing 64 shades of gray. Real-world images don’t have crisp, computer-generated edges, so each pixel tends to shade into the adjoining ones. The effect is a rather smooth picture that has more “effective” resolution than you’d expect (see photos 4, 5, and 6). This is why pictures shown on color displays that incorporate palette D/A converters often look better. Look closely at a line boundary and see if there is some gradual shading.

As an example, you’re probably aware that a standard TV does not make a good computer monitor. Trying to fit more than 40 characters on a line results in an unreadable display. However, newspaper headlines displayed on a TV are easily readable even though the characters are very small, simply because each pixel can take on many brightness levels. Watch your TV carefully and see.

Finally, why does ImageWise use 6 bits per pixel and not more if gray scale is such a good idea? Again, it is a cost trade-off. We have to digitize and determine the gray-scale value of 256 data points in 50 μs, or one every 200 ns. This requires a fast A/D converter called a flash A/D converter. The price of one is directly related to the number of bits it resolves. Eight-bit models are considerably more expensive than 4- or 6-bit chips. The device I ultimately chose was the RCA 3306 6-bit flash A/D converter, which can operate at 12 million to 16 million samples per second (our sample rate is 5 megahertz). I’ll talk more about this next month.

Display/Receiver Hardware

The receiver has two main functions: It accepts data from the RS-232 serial port and displays the resulting picture on a monitor. Figure 5 shows the receiver hardware.

As in many recent Circuit Cellar projects, the receiver uses an Intel 8031 single-chip microprocessor to control the rest of the hardware. A 2764 EPROM stores the 8031’s program. An Intel 8254 Programmable Interval Timer (PIT) produces the sync pulses. The video field data is held in a pair of 32K-byte static RAMs and is converted to an analog voltage by a specialized video D/A converter. The MC145406 converts RS-232 voltages into TTL levels for the 8031’s serial port.

It was tempting to use the 8031 to produce the sync pulses directly, but a little study showed that there was no way to get the precise timings required for a stable picture. The 8254 is connected to produce repetitive pulses, so the 8031 need only program the appropriate values into the 8254's registers when a change is required. The 8254 uses a 500-ns (2-MHz) clock divided from the 10-MHz crystal oscillator. Figure 6 shows the 8254 pulses for a normal video line.

The Telmos 1852 is a specialized video D/A converter that accepts up to 8 video data bits, a blanking input, and a sync input. The analog output conforms to the standard video specifications. Using this D/A converter eliminates a lot of hardware that would otherwise be required to combine the video, blanking, and sync signals to produce the right output voltage with enough power to drive the monitor. The 8031 ensures that the 2 unused bits (the low-order ones) are always 0.

The 16-bit address required by the 64K-byte field buffer is divided into two parts: a high byte supplied by the 8031 and a low byte that can come from either the 8031 or an 8-bit counter. Normally, the counter steps through the 256 pixels on each line, and the 8031 counts out the lines in the high byte. Both bytes are supplied by the 8031 when it reads or writes buffer data.

A pair of LS244s isolate the field buffer’s data bus from the 8031’s data bus, continued...
Figure 5: Schematic diagram of the ImageWise display/receiver hardware.
except when the 8031 is reading or writing to the buffer. A third LS244 connects the DIP switches to the 8031’s data bus. An 11.059-MHz crystal allows the 8031 to receive and generate standard RS-232 bit rates. The video data and sync timings are derived from a separate 10-MHz crystal oscillator circuit.

The divide-by-two counter that produces the video data clock is reset by the horizontal sync pulses from the 8254. This ensures that the pixel clock has the same phase in each line. Without the reset, the clock would alternate phases in successive lines because the length of each line is an odd multiple of the 500-ns clock. Worse, a given line would have a different phase in each frame because the frame length is also an odd multiple of the clock.

Serial Data
Each video field has 256 pixels on each line and 244 lines, for a total of 62,464 pixels (we round the half line up to a full continued...
Figure 5: Continued.
line). Each pixel is contained in 1 byte, so there are 62,464 bytes in each field. If you use a serial rate of 3840 bytes per second (38.4k bps), a complete field will take about 16.2 seconds to transmit (it takes 10.8 seconds at 57.6k bps).

Fortunately, ImageWise takes advantage of the fact that most scenes have large areas of the same shade. The digitizer/transmitter (which I'll describe in detail next month) can compress each line of data by representing repeated bytes by a value and repetition count. In actual practice, the amount of data in a field can be reduced by a factor of two to four, with a corresponding reduction in transmission time.

The serial data format is 8 data bits, 1 start bit, no parity, and 1 stop bit. I did not build error checking into the system because it is intended for relatively short, robust connections. In any event, an error will generally be confined to a single line on the display. Because the video data itself has only 6 bits, 2 bits in each byte can be used for control information. Table 1 details the byte encoding used by ImageWise. The 8031 shifts the video data left so that it goes to the high-order 6 bits of the D/A converter.

The receiver puts the bytes into the field buffer as fast as it can, but at the faster rates it’s possible for the transmitter to get ahead of the receiver. A circular buffer in the 8031’s internal RAM holds up to 48 bytes until they can be processed. If this buffer begins to fill, the receiver sends an XOFF character to tell the transmitter to stop sending data. The receiver will continue transferring bytes from the circular buffer to the frame buffer until the former is nearly empty. Just before the circular buffer runs dry, the receiver sends an XON character to tell the transmitter to resume sending. If the circular buffer does empty completely, the receiver will simply wait for more bytes to show up.

As we’ll see next month, the transmitter waits for an XON from the receiver before beginning to send data. The receiver will send the XON sometime after the circular buffer empties, even if it has sent one before. A DIP-switch setting determines the time between emptying the buffer and sending the XON. The choices are continuous pictures, every 4 seconds, every 8 seconds, or manually triggered (see table 2). A push button is used to trigger a new field from the transmitter in manual mode.

The Software

It’s worthwhile to describe how the software pulls the receiver hardware together. The two main jobs are maintain-

---

**Table 1: ImageWise serial data encoding.** (a) This data flows from the digitizer/transmitter to the display/receiver. (b) This data flows from the display/receiver to the digitizer/transmitter or is sent by a computer connected to the digitizer/transmitter. All other characters are ignored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bit number</th>
<th>Bit Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td>Video data byte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 0 x x x x x x</td>
<td>Start of video field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0</td>
<td>End of video field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 1 1 x x x x x</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0</td>
<td>Repeat previous byte x times (0 = 16 reps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 0 0 1 x x x x</td>
<td>Repeat previous byte 16 x times (0 = 256 reps)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 1 x x x x x</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Table 2: Receiver DIP-switch settings.** ON and OFF refer to switch positions. (a) SW1, SW2, and SW3 select the serial bit rate (must match transmitter rate). (b) SW4 and SW5 select the time-out interval. (c) SW6 and SW7 select the transmitter resolution. (Note: A manual push button is connected to the SW8 position, so SW8 must be OFF.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SW1</th>
<th>SW2</th>
<th>SW3</th>
<th>Serial transmission rate (bits/second)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>9600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>28.8k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>57.6k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SW4</th>
<th>SW5</th>
<th>Time-out interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>Continuous pictures, no delay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>4-second delay between pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>8-second delay between pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>Send picture by manual push-button trigger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SW6</th>
<th>SW7</th>
<th>Transmitter resolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>Full: 256 by 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>Half: 128 by 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>OFF</td>
<td>Quarter: 64 by 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON</td>
<td>ON</td>
<td>Reserved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: 4800 bps intentionally omitted.)
ing stable video sync and accepting bytes from the serial interface. The code is written in assembly language to maximize the performance of the 8031. Figure 7 is a flowchart of the software’s major components.

The 8254 PIT generates the precise sync signals for each line, so the 8031 need only reprogram the PIT when a change is needed. Because changes to the 8254’s settings take effect with the next 8254 sync output, the 8031 must make the changes one sync pulse before they’re actually needed. All timings are determined by counting sync pulses, which are connected to the 8031’s INTO interrupt request pin.

The INTO interrupt handler decrements a counter and checks to see if it’s 0. If so, an 8254 change is required; otherwise, the handler simply returns to the mainline code. Each change to the 8254 involves writing a few bytes and reloading the counter to tell how many interrupts will pass before the next change.

Each 8031 instruction takes 1 or 2 µs. At most, only about 50 instructions can be executed per horizontal line. During the vertical retrace interval the sync pulses are only 31.5 µs apart, giving time for only 20 instructions per sync pulse. The interrupt routine must have enough

continued

Figure 7: Flowchart for the ImageWise display/receiver system’s software.
time to get ready for the 8254 loading during the short sync pulses in the vertical retrace interval, so control is passed to the routine two sync pulses before the change is needed. The interrupt routine then uses a polling loop to detect the last sync pulse.

Another interrupt is generated within the 8031 whenever a byte is received on the serial port. This interrupt awakens the serial interrupt handler routine, which reads the byte from the port and places it in the circular buffer in the 8031's internal RAM. The serial interrupt handler has a lower priority than the sync interrupt; consequently, the serial interrupt handler can be interrupted whenever a sync pulse occurs.

The sync and serial interrupt routines are linked by a background task that simply waits for bytes to show up in the circular buffer. Whenever a byte appears in the buffer, the background task takes it out and decides what to do with it. In most cases, the 'head' is either video data that should be put in the field buffer or a count that tells how many times the previous data byte should be repeated.

The ordinary way of putting a byte in the field buffer would be to have a subroutine that saves all the registers, sets up the buffer address, does the write, restores the registers, and returns to the caller. Unfortunately, this scheme doesn't work in our application because the writes to the frame buffer have to occur just after the video syncs to reduce sparkles in the display. Additionally, the sync interrupt routine must get control at the same time to reset the 8254. Something has to give!

The solution is to combine the two functions in the video sync interrupt handler. Whenever the background routine has a byte to be written in the buffer, it sets up the registers and turns on a flag bit. The sync routine checks the flag, does the write if it's on, then turns off the flag bit. The background routine sits in a loop until it sees that the flag has been reset, then continues on its way. Because the background routine has handled all the register setups, the interrupt routine can proceed at full speed and write the byte immediately without saving or restoring any registers.

The possibility arises that the serial interrupt handler will be interrupted by the video sync handler. Because the video sync handler assumes that the registers are set up for it, the serial interrupt handler has to take special precautions to make sure that the wrong byte doesn't get written at the wrong address.

The sync interrupt handler checks the switches once every frame (at the end of the second field) to see if anything's changed. If so, it drops what it's doing and runs through the power-on initialization routine again. If a picture is being received when you flip the switches, it will get garbled because the serial port will miss a few characters. The rule of thumb is to change switch settings only when nothing else is happening.

**Experimenter**

While printed circuit boards and kits are available for the ImageWise system, I encourage you to build your own. If you don't mind doing a little work, I will support your efforts as usual. A hexadecimal file of the executable code for the 8031 digitizer and display system EPROMs, sample picture files, and the Turbo Pascal code for storing images on an IBM PC or SB180 are available for downloading from my BBS at (203) 871-1988. Alternatively, you can send me a preformatted IBM PC or SB180 disk with return postage, and I'll put the files on it for you (the hexadecimal file could be used with my serial EPROM programmer, for example). Of course, this free software is limited to noncommercial personal use.

**Circuit Cellar Feedback**

This month's feedback begins on page 58.

**Next Month**

Having a gray-scale video display is one thing, but where do you get all the pictures? I'll describe the digitizer/transmitter hardware that captures images from a camera or TV and sends them to either the receiver for immediate display or a computer for storage.

Special thanks to Ed Nisely for his expert collaboration on this project.

**Editor's Note**

Steve often refers to previous Circuit Cellar articles. Most of these past articles are available in book form from BYTE Books, McGraw-Hill Book Company, P.O. Box 400, Hightstown, NJ 08250.


The following items are available from CCI

P.O. Box 428
Tolland, CT 06084
(203) 875-2751
1. ImageWise digitizer/transmitter board experimenter's kit. Contains digitizer/transmitter printed circuit board, 11.05-MHz crystal, programmed 2764 EPROM with transmitter software, and CA3306 flash A/D converter and manual with complete parts list. DT01-EXP $99
2. ImageWise display/receiver board experimenter's kit. Contains gray-scale display/receiver printed circuit board, 11.05-MHz crystal, programmed 2764 EPROM with receiver software, Telsmos 1852 video D/A converter, manual with complete parts list, and an IBM PC 2.0 disk containing sample digitized images and test patterns. DR01-EXP $99; DT01-EXP and DR01-EXP together $179
3. ImageWise digitizer/transmitter full kit. Contains all digitizer/transmitter components, including printed circuit board, 64K bytes of static RAM, IC sockets, crystals, programmed 2764, CA3306 flash A/D converter, manual, and an IBM PC 2.0 disk containing utility routines for storing and displaying (dithered, not gray scale) and downloading image files using an IBM PC. Does not include power supply or case. DT01-KIT $249
4. ImageWise display/receiver full kit. Contains all gray-scale display/receiver components, including printed circuit board, 64K bytes of static RAM, IC sockets, crystals, programmed 2764, Telsmos 1852 video D/A converter, manual, and an IBM PC 2.0 disk containing sample digitized images and test patterns. Does not include case or power supply. DR01-KIT $249; DT01-KIT and DR01-KIT together $489

All payments should be made in U.S. dollars by check, money order, MasterCard, or Visa. Surface delivery (U.S. and Canada only): add $3 for U.S., $6 for Canada. For delivery to Europe via U.S. airmail, add $10. Three-day air freight delivery: add $8 for U.S. (UPS Blue), $25 for Canada (Purolator overnight), $45 for Europe (Federal Express), or $60 for Asia and elsewhere in the world (Federal Express). Shipping costs are the same for one or two units.

There is an on-line Circuit Cellar bulletin board system that supports past and present projects. You are invited to call and exchange ideas and comments with other Circuit Cellar supporters. The 300/1200/2400-bps BBS is on-line 24 hours a day at (203) 871-1988.

To be included on the Circuit Cellar mailing list and receive periodic project updates and support materials, please circle 100 on the Reader Service Inquiry card at the back of the magazine.
CHOOSE THE NAME THAT COMMUNICATES QUALITY.

We'd like to pass along some data on why you should insist on a Hayes Smartmodem 1200™ or Smartmodem 2400™.

First and foremost, no one knows more about building reliable, high performance modems than Hayes. And no wonder. Hayes pioneered the personal computer modem a decade ago, and today is actually the de facto standard in computer communications with the widespread adoption of the Hayes Standard 'AT' Command Set.

Second, Hayes has a longstanding and unwavering commitment to customer support, not just to service its products, but to serve as a resource for information, assistance, and technical advice for everyone from the home user to the corporate communications manager. Moreover, Hayes provides more than a warranty on the material and workmanship of its products. Hayes warrants they will perform as promised, as well.

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Hayes
SAY YES TO THE FUTURE
Pull-Down Menus in C

Add a user-friendly menu system to almost any IBM PC application

One aspect of commercial software that impresses me is the sharp-looking screen displays: the use of colors, the fast screen updates, and the easy-to-use, pull-down menus. Making a program look good is no substitute for making it perform well, but it certainly can make an impression on the user. With this in mind, when I began studying C, I decided to create a general-purpose, pull-down menu system in C for the IBM PC and its compatibles. I started by examining the pull-down systems I admired and trying to emulate their best features.

My idea of an excellent pull-down menu system is one that appears in a window at the top of the screen. In that window, you make selections by entering a letter that represents an option—the capitalized letter in the option name—or by highlighting options with the cursor-control keys.

If you use the cursor keys, the system will automatically pull down the appropriate menu when you highlight a main menu item to browse through its options. When a pull-down menu is present, you can select one of its options the same way. Pressing Escape puts away the current pull-down box and returns you to the previous highlighted menu level. It also takes you from the top level back to the DOS prompt. The pull-down menus are nondestructive of any text that they overlay; that is, any text underneath a pull-down box is restored when you withdraw the menu.

The BIOS Interface

The BIOS interrupts are one good way of controlling the video output and eliminating the need for external video drivers such as ANS1.SYS. Although the prospect of directly controlling the hardware is somewhat intimidating, the task itself isn't too difficult. The article “POKEing Around in the IBM PC” by Hugh R. Howson (BYTE, November and December 1983) provided much of the information I needed.

While BIOS interrupts are not part of the standard C language, most versions come with functions that provide the interface. The Lattice C compiler lets you initiate BIOS interrupts with int86(). For example, to clear a rectangular area of the screen for a window, you load the registers as in table 1 and issue an int86() for interrupt 10 hexadecimal. Listing 1 contains the actual Lattice C code for the clear_window() function. Another function, cls(), uses clear_window(1,1,80,25) to clear the screen.

The windows in my program, PULLDOWN, are constructed by a fairly standard technique. [Editor’s note: PULLDOWN is available for the IBM PC and compatibles in Lattice C source code on disk, in print, and on BIX. This program provides the window structure for a pull-down menu system; individual routines for the various functions called from the windows are not included. See the insert card following page 324 for details. Listings are also available on BYTEnet. See page 4.]

First, the program calls the function win_save(‘s’) to save the screen image. Next, it calls make_window( ), which actually draws the window, calling box( ) to draw the box and clear_window( ) to clear the area within it. When the window is no longer needed, the program calls win_save(‘r’) to restore the previously saved screen image, making the window appear to vanish.

To make these functions work efficiently with the various video cards available, you need to know what type of card you have. The function what_mon( ) returns a 0 if you have a monochrome card and a 1 if you have a color graphics card. Then PULLDOWN initializes two variables, nor_attr, the normal text attribute, and hi_attr, the attribute used to highlight menu selections.

Originally, I had used the function bios_prt(), which uses DOS calls, for all screen writing. As a well-behaved function, it has the advantage of being compatible with future DOS versions and equipment. However, the display was too slow at pulling down menus. You could actually watch the pull-down box being drawn. So I wrote a function, fast_write(), to write the characters directly to the screen buffer (see listing 2). Unfortunately, this sort of machine-specific code reduces program portability. The base address of the video text area may change with the introduction of new video cards. I believed, however, that the increase in performance justified the sacrifice.

PULLDOWN includes both the fast_write( ) and bios_prt( ) options for screen output. All of the text output to the screen is routed through the function print(column,row,string), which calls either fast_write( ), the default, or the slower bios_prt( ). If you include the optional s parameter, for example, pull-down runs in slow mode.

The function fast_write( ) calculates the starting point of the text buffer for whichever type of video card is present, monochrome or color graphics. Once you know the base address of the buffer, it is simple to calculate the position of the screen writing. As a well-behaved function, it has the advantage of being compatible with future DOS versions and equipment. However, the display was too slow at pulling down menus. You could actually watch the pull-down box being drawn. So I wrote a function, fast_write(), to write the characters directly to the screen buffer (see listing 2). Unfortunately, this sort of machine-specific code reduces program portability. The base address of the video text area may change with the introduction of new video cards. I believed, however, that the increase in performance justified the sacrifice.

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each screen character. The base address for a color graphics adapter card is B800h; the character appearing in the upper left corner of the display, display(1,1), is located there.

To write directly to the display, you poke the value of a character into the proper address and then poke the appropriate text attribute into the adjacent memory position. In the video text buffer, each even-numbered byte represents a character position on the screen; the adjoining odd-numbered byte contains that character's attribute. If you are using a CGA card, the program must know which graphics page you are using. The global variables page, attribute, and mon_type provide the information needed for this and other functions.

To make PULLDOWN easy to modify, I used an array of structures to contain the main menu options, the pull-down options, and the pointers to the functions these options call. As an example of the method I used, if you had a maximum of three options in each pull-down menu, you could create a structure like this:

```c
structure menu_str{  
    char * head;  
    char * body[3];  
    void(*fun1)();  
    void(*fun2)();  
    void(*fun3)();  
};
```

The main menu option pointer is head; body[3] is an array of pointers to the pull-down options; and (*fun1)(), (*fun2)(), and (*fun3)() are pointers to the functions called. (I had to list them separately because Lattice C does not allow arrays of function pointers.)

Later in your program, you could assign the structure menu_str to the options[] array and initialize it (see listing 3). This structure represents the main menu option, File, which pulls down the options Path, Load, and Save. Selecting one of these options calls the appropriate function, setpath(), loadfile(), or savefile(). Further array elements can contain other main menu choices.

A function such as setpath may be called with either of two statements: setpath(); or (options[1].fun1)();, which uses a pointer to the function's address rather than its name. Pointers to functions are particularly useful in creating multiple-choice menus.

### The Program Flow

The main() routine makes calls to identify the type of video card present and sets up the proper text attributes. It defines the menu structure, calls win_save() to save the current text screen, then passes its address to the menu() function. Upon entering menu(), PULLDOWN draws the menu window at the top of the screen and prints the options within it, highlighting the first one. The cur_opt index points to the first option on the menu. If you touch a letter key, the program scans all the main menu options (m_menu[i].head[i]) to see if any of the options contain the same letter in upper case. If one does, then that option is highlighted, and the program calls pull_down(). Pressing a left or right arrow key adjusts the index and highlights a new selection. If you touch Enter, the program calls the pull_down() function that draws the pull-down menu, and interprets further selections. If you press either Enter or a cursor key, the program determines that you are using the highlighting option and sets the expert variable to 0. When ex-

---

### Table 1: Registers and the contents needed to clear a window on the screen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Register</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>6 (scroll page)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>0 (clear specified area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BH</td>
<td>Attribute used to clear the area (BL unused)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>Row of the upper left corner (starts at 0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Column of the upper left corner (starts at 0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td>Row of the lower right corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>Column of the lower right corner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Listing 1: The Lattice C code required to implement the clear_window() function defined in table 1. This function clears a rectangular area of the screen to make a window.

```c
/* x = column, y = row, width and height = window size */
void clear_window(x,y,width,height)  
unsigned int x,y,width,height;  
{  
extern unsigned int attribute;  
struct {unsigned int ax,bx,cx,dx,si,di,ds,es;} regist;  
y--; x--; /* DOS treats upper left corner of the display, (1,1), as located there. */  
regist.dcx=(y+height-1)<<8;regist.bx=(attribute<<8);regist.ax=0x0600;  
int86(0x10, &regist, &regist);  
}
```

### Listing 2: The fast_write function writes directly to the screen buffer.

```c
void fast_write(x,y,string)  
int x,y;  
char * string;  
{  
extern unsigned int page;  
extern unsigned int attribute;  
extern unsigned int mon_type;  
extern unsigned int mon_type;  
extern unsigned int offset,orig;  
if (page <= 3 && page >= 0) offset = 4096*page;  
orig = offset;  
offset=offset+((y-1)*160)+(2*(x-1));  
int86(0x10, &regist, &regist);  
poke(position,offset,attribute,1);  
poke(position,offset+1,character,1);  
offset=offset+2;  
}
```
O/S ARCHITECTURE: sink with UNIX or soar with QNX.

If the sheer weight of UNIX brings the PC to its knees, all applications running under it will suffer. Conceived more than a decade and a half ago, UNIX is today the result of modifications, additions and patches by hundreds of programmers. It needs the resources of at least an AT.

Compare this to the QNX O/S, designed by a dedicated team with a common purpose and complete understanding of both the software and the environment in which it must run. Having elegantly solved the problem of inter-task communications, QNX is more than capable of both networking and real time performance — the superior choice for process control and office automation systems.

Quick and efficient on a PC, QNX soars on an AT. QNX occupies 70K (stand-alone version) to 104K (network version) of system memory and allows 40 tasks (programs) and up to 10 terminals per computer.

QNX modular architecture facilitates easy adaptation and extensions by software developers for specific requirements. In addition, PC-DOS runs as a single-tasking guest operating system under QNX. With the DOS Development System, DOS EXE files can be developed in shorter time than under DOS itself. Communication among all tasks is via “message-passing.” Tasks anywhere on a network of up to 255 computers communicate rapidly and transparently with each other.

With the true distributed processing and resource sharing of QNX, all the resources on the network are available to any user. Application programs and data can be distributed over the network without having to go through a central file server.

Network growth is fast and simple. If your disk becomes a bottleneck, add a disk anywhere on the network. If your needs outgrow your present configuration, just add terminals and/or computers as required, without having to re-write programs and without system degradation.

If you would like to know the secret of the QNX architecture, please give us a call. We invite End Users, VAR’s, OEM’s and Software Developers to discover a whole new world of computing capabilities.

Over 25,000 systems have been installed worldwide since 1982.
pert is 0, the program calls pull_down() automatically. Either way, the pointer to the main menu option, cur_opt, and the address of the menu structure, m_menu, are passed to pull_down().

The pull_down() routine must calculate where to draw the pull-down box, based on the index variable, cur_opt, and the length of the main menu options. You can't set the position ahead of time, because this menu system is flexible. All it has to work with is the structure passed to it, and this will vary according to the application. Once the program knows the box's starting position, it scans the list of pull-down options to find the longest one and sets the box width to that value. The function make_window() draws the pull-down menu box and prints the options within it. It is not a "true" window because text is not automatically confined within its borders, but it looks like one.

The program then waits for you to select a menu option and puts away the pull-down window with win_save('r') before calling the selected function. Touching Escape will also put away the pull-down window and return to the main menu, setting expert to 1. If you touch Escape when the main menu is active with no pull-down windows showing, the program removes the menu display window from the screen and exits.

Looking Through the Window
PULLDOWN allows you to add a user-friendly menu system to almost any IBM PC application. Due to the widespread use of pull-down menus, most users will find it easy to use and understand. If you like the menu system as it is, simply alter the structure statement to reflect your menu options and their interfaces and add the pull-down menus to your programs.

You can modify this system in many ways. You could add support for a mouse. Or you could have the pull-down box stay put when calling functions. This would be useful if you wanted to create another window for more options next to the current one. The PULLDOWN.C program listing may give you ideas for other functions and interfaces and can serve as a tutorial for implementing them.

Listing 3: The structure for the main menu option, File, which provides the options Path, Load, and Save. These options call the functions setpath(), loadfile(), and savefile(), respectively.

```c
int setpath();
int loadfile();
int savefile();
static struct menu_str options[N] = {
  "File",
  "Path",
  "Load",
  "Save",
  setpath,
  loadfile,
  savefile,
/* repeat for each element in main menu */
};
```

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- Three debugging modes: single-step, trace, and animate.
- Set, clear, and examine breakpoints. NEW!
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- Display and search through source code while debugging. NEW!

Advanced Integrated Editor.

The Microsoft QuickBASIC Editor is integrated with the compiler to make all your programming as fast and efficient as possible.

- Built-in editor places cursor on problem in source when error occurs in compilation.
- In contrast to other compilers that give up after finding a single error, Microsoft QuickBASIC's editor keeps track of all errors found during compilation. No more hassles with recompiling over and over.
- Editor supports both Insert and Overtype modes. NEW!
- Fully compatible with SuperKey, ProKey, and SideKick. NEW!

8087 Math Coprocessor Support.

The standard Microsoft QuickBASIC math package has been enhanced to take advantage of numeric coprocessors in machines that have them. Now you have several ways to optimize your program's performance.

- Microsoft QuickBASIC 3.0 generates fast in-line code for machines equipped with 8087 or 80287 coprocessors. Now your programs can be as fast as the hardware allows. NEW!
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- Choose from the Microsoft Binary Math routines for faster math or the new 8087 software emulation routines for more accuracy when you don't have a coprocessor.

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In addition to the standard BASIC commands, Microsoft QuickBASIC Version 3.0 has a variety of advanced statements and features similar to those found in C and Pascal. By making structured programming easy, Microsoft QuickBASIC makes programs both easier to write and easier to maintain. Older BASIC features like line numbers and GOTO statements are strictly optional.

- New statements include SELECT CASE, DO WHILE and DO UNTIL, LOOP WHILE and LOOP UNTIL, and EXIT. NEW!
- Block IF/THEN/ELSE/ENDIF IF statements virtually eliminate any need for GOTOs.
- Subprograms may be called by name and passed parameters.
- Microsoft QuickBASIC now supports user-defined CONSTANTS. NEW!
- Both true local and global variables are supported.
- Microsoft QuickBASIC supports alphanumeric labels as well as line numbers.

Modular Programming Support.

Microsoft QuickBASIC's separate compilation lets you create stand-alone programs a piece at a time. You just compile your routines and add them to a library. Future programs can use those routines by simply linking in your libraries.

- Create stand-alone programs, with or without a separate runtime package.
- Link support routines once at beginning of a programming session, then forget about linking.
- Includes library for access to DOS and BIOS interrupts.
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Microsoft QuickBASIC

Benchmark QuickBASIC 2.0 QuickBASIC 3.0
Graphics 21.42 9.83
(500 Circles) 16.92 6.18
Floating Point Math 5.27 3.02
Quick Sort 12.00 6.48
All test results in seconds. Tests were performed on an IBM PC/AT equipped with an 80287 coprocessor and an 8 MHz 80386 clock.

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Last month I introduced you to BERT, a simple, programmable robot made from inexpensive parts (see photo 1). I described how his circuits worked and how to build his circuit boards. Now I’ll discuss how to troubleshoot and program your assembled BERT.

After the four main components—base, motor driver board, on-board computer, and speech board—have been built and connected (see photo 2 in part 1), you should have a working BERT. Well, he should work. To see if he is fully functional, put him on the floor and press the self-test button. He should perform the routine shown in table 1. If he doesn’t perform as expected, you must determine the problem by first isolating it to one of the main components, then referring to that component’s schematic and its troubleshooting section.

Motor Check
Testing of the motor driver circuitry is accomplished with some wires and a resistor. These will temporarily substitute for the on-board computer (OBC). First, secure the board to the robot base. Make sure all electrical connections to the motors, both batteries, speaker, sensors, and LED are secure. After this is done, we are ready to begin testing.

Caution! Do not stuff any wire into the connector socket while performing these tests. Doing so will cause the socket's...
connector pin spacing to enlarge, making the connector's pins unable to correctly grip the DIP connector.

To check for motor operation, you will need three pieces of wire (approximately 10 centimeters long) and a 510-ohm resistor. Solder one end of the resistor to +5 volts. Then, strip 1 millimeter of insulation off each end of each wire. Now solder one end of each wire to the following points on the solder side of the motor driver board: wire 1 to IC2, pin 12; wire 2 to IC1, pin 11; and wire 3 to IC1, pin 3.

With the above connections made and power from both batteries being fed to the board, temporarily connect the free ends of wires 2 and 3 to ground. Then, connect the free end of wire 1 to the free end of the 510-ohm resistor. Both motors should spin in the reverse direction. If either one turns forward instead of backward, just reverse the connections to that motor's terminals.

When this test is completed, leave the connection between wire 1 and the resistor intact. Now, connect the free ends of wires 2 and 3 to the resistor as well. Both motors should spin in the direction required to move the robot forward. This concludes the motor driver circuitry test. Remove all three wires.

**Beeper Test**

To test the beeper speaker, simply solder one of the aforementioned wires to the free end of the 510-ohm resistor. Solder the other end of that wire to IC3, pin 9. Now, solder one end of another piece of wire to ground. With your ear right up against the beeper speaker, brush the free end of that wire against IC3, pin 9. You should hear some noise. When you've completed your testing of this circuit, remove the resistor as well as all wires.

**Sensor Testing**

Sensor testing requires a voltmeter. Connect the negative end of the voltmeter to ground. Connect the other end to the OBC socket (S1), pin 7. You should measure +5 V. Depress the right whisker sensor. You should measure 0.0 V. Perform the same test for the nose and left whisker sensors on pins 6 and 8, respectively, of the same connector (S1).

**LED Test**

Testing the LED (eye) circuitry is simple. All you do is temporarily ground IC3, pin 11. The LED should illuminate. The circuits involving the sensors, speaker, and eye are very simple. If any of these circuits fail to check out, first check the connections to the batteries, then their voltage level. After that, merely start at the beginning of the circuit (where the test wires are attached) and follow the levels through the circuit until the break is found.

The motor driver circuits are a bit more complex, but not much. There are actually two circuits, one for each motor. Remember to troubleshoot only one at a time.

Again, check the power connections first. Next, check the inputs to the gates. Find out what logic levels are on the inputs; then, using the truth table for AND gates, figure out what levels should be on the outputs of the gates. With this information, and following the outputs to the bases of all four transistors, write down on the schematic what level should be on the base of each transistor.

At this point you will need a voltmeter. Attach its negative lead to ground. Check the TIP31's emitters. They must measure 0.0 V. Each base that should be high will measure approximately 0.7 V. Each base that should be low will measure less than 0.3 V. If they do not, trace the connections from the base back to its driving gate and check the value of its series resistor.

**Some Helpful Hints**

When BERT is powered up, the OBC is in a reset state. A power-on reset lasts only \( \frac{\tau}{8} \) second. If the reset button is pressed, the reset state will last as long as the button is held down, plus \( \frac{\tau}{8} \) second. In either case, as long as the reset state lasts, the motor driver board will cause both motors to turn in the forward direction. In fact, if the motor driver board does not receive signals from the OBC (as is the case during the OBC's reset state), it will always cause both motors to turn in the forward direction. Therefore, if at this stage BERT goes forward and keeps going forward, it is likely that the problem lies with the OBC or the connections between the motor driver board and the OBC.

The beep produced by the speaker is the result of the 6802 microprocessor causing the peripheral interface adapter to toggle one of its outputs (pin 14). If the beep is not heard, use a logic probe or oscilloscope to check the PIA's pin for a 4-second train of pulses. If the train is there, follow the signal along its path to the speaker to find where the circuit is broken. If the pulses are not found at the PIA's pin, there is either a problem on the motor driver board that is holding the pin at a constant level (short to ground or +5 V) or you have a problem with the OBC and must troubleshoot it.

**Feedback Problems**

When the test button is pressed, pin 6 of the 6802 should go low and the OBC should enter its nonmaskable-interrupt routine. The first thing this routine does is output signals to the motor driver board that cause the motors to spin in a forward direction. These signals are output from the PIA's pins 10, 11, and 12.

Immediately after the test button is pressed, these pins should go high and remain in that state until the robot has gone a distance equal to 50 (decimal) holes from the hole sensor. The actual distance traveled will depend on the size of the wheels. Should these pins not respond as above, there is either a problem on the motor driver board that is holding the pins at a constant level (short to ground or +5 V) or you have a problem with the OBC and must troubleshoot it.

If the signals at these pins do transition, but only briefly, here is the most probable reason: BERT uses feedback from the drivetrain to determine how far he has gone. If he does not have this feedback, he has no way of knowing the distance he has traveled. This feedback comes from the hole-sensor circuit. If BERT fails to stop, look at the output of this circuit.

BERT counts these pulses at PIA pin 18. This input pin is a negative-going, edge-sensitive input. In the self-test mode, BERT will turn the motors on in the forward direction and leave them on until he has counted 50 negative edges (or holes) at PIA pin 18. Should the output of the hole-sensor circuit be faulty, or not arrive at the PIA, BERT will simply keep going.

**Noise**

There is a very subtle problem which can arise with BERT that relates to the hole-sensor circuit described above. Small DC motors are electrically noisy. This noise manifests itself as large (up to 100 V in amplitude) and narrow (100 nanoseconds to 20 microseconds) voltage transients, or spikes.

These spikes may be large enough to propagate through not only the power leads (from battery to boards), but also...
BUILD BERT, PART 2

Programming in BERTL

BERTL is BERT’s control language. It is an interpretive language that does syntax checking at program entry time. Table A lists the BERTL commands and their functions.

Each of the commands (except E) requires a parameter. If you command BERT to go forward, for example, he needs to know how far. The entire command would be Fnn, where nn can be any hexadecimal number from 01 to FF (FF hexadecimal equals 255 decimal).

BERTL commands can be downloaded from any serial device with the following characteristics: 300 bps, 7 data bits, 2 stop bits, and no parity. One way to enter BERTL programs into your robot is to write a short program that receives characters from your computer’s keyboard and then sends them via the serial port to the robot.

The only drawback to this method is that it is impossible to store the program for future use or to change the robot’s program without reentering it entirely. I suggest that the program be edited on a computer using a word processor or text editor and then sent to the robot. This allows you to conveniently edit and store many different BERTL programs.

The Commands in Detail

Here is a description of the BERTL commands:

• Bnn (Backward): This command causes BERT to reverse both wheels. They will continue in reverse until the number of pulses from the feedback circuit equals the parameter. In BERT’s case, a value of 32 (hexadecimal) equals approximately 32 centimeters.

• Cnn (Call subroutine): This command causes the conditional execution of a subroutine, depending upon the condition of the on-board sensors. The parameter determines both the condition upon which the subroutine is called and which particular subroutine (out of a possible four) is to be called.

The first digit in the parameter specifies which subroutine will be called. The subroutines are 0, 1, 2, and 3 (see the command N). For the command B12 C00, the robot would go backward 12 cm, then call subroutine 0 regardless of the state of the on-board sensors. For the command F09 C51, the robot will first go forward 9 cm and then, if the nose button is low and both whiskers high, call subroutine 1.

• E (End): This command has no parameter. Upon receiving it, the robot “honks” to indicate that it has received the downloaded program. It waits for you to activate its nose sensor, after which it executes the program. It then waits for its nose sensor to be activated again. This procedure can be repeated indefinitely.

• Fnn (Forward): Run both motors on in the forward direction. Otherwise, this

Table A: The BERTL command set.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Command</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Call (subroutine, conditional or unconditional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>End program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Goback (to main routine, unconditional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Honk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Name (of subroutine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Shoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Talk (allophone or word)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B: Conditions for sensor parameter c. The symbol “&” represents the logical AND, and “+” is the logical OR condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value of c</th>
<th>Logical condition of sensors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Don’t care (disregard state of sensors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Left low &amp; Nose low &amp; Right high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Left low &amp; Nose high &amp; Right low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Left low &amp; Nose high &amp; Right high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Left high &amp; Nose low &amp; Right low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Left high &amp; Nose low &amp; Right high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Left high &amp; Nose high &amp; Right low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Left high &amp; Nose high &amp; Right high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Left low &amp; Nose low &amp; Right low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Left low &amp; Nose low &amp; Right high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Left low &amp; Nose high &amp; Right low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Left low &amp; Nose high &amp; Right high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Left high &amp; Nose low &amp; Right low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Left high &amp; Nose low &amp; Right high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Left high &amp; Nose high &amp; Right low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Left high &amp; Nose high &amp; Right high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note the logical conditions AND and OR.)

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## Table C: Allophones used by the SPO256 chip on the speech board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Delay (ms)</th>
<th>Allophone</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>00 Delay 10 ms</td>
<td>10 mm milk</td>
<td>20 aw out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>01 Delay 30 ms</td>
<td>11 dt1 part</td>
<td>21 dd2 do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>02 Delay 50 ms</td>
<td>12 dh1 they</td>
<td>22 gg3 wig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>03 Delay 100 ms</td>
<td>13 iy see</td>
<td>23 vv vest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>04 Delay 200 ms</td>
<td>14 ey beige</td>
<td>24 gg1 guest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>05 oy boy</td>
<td>15 dd1 could</td>
<td>25 sh ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>06 i sky</td>
<td>16 uw1 to</td>
<td>26 zh azure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>07 eh end</td>
<td>17 ao aught</td>
<td>27 rr2 brain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>08 kk3 comb</td>
<td>18 aa hot</td>
<td>28 ff food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>09 pp pal</td>
<td>19 yy2 yolk</td>
<td>29 kk2 sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0A</td>
<td>0A jh dodge</td>
<td>1A ae hat</td>
<td>2A kk1 can't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0B</td>
<td>0B nn1 thin</td>
<td>1B hh1 he</td>
<td>2B zz zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0C</td>
<td>0C ih sit</td>
<td>1C bb1 rib</td>
<td>2C ng anchor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0D</td>
<td>0D tt2 two</td>
<td>1D th thin</td>
<td>2D ll lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0E</td>
<td>0E nr1 rural</td>
<td>1E uh book</td>
<td>2E ww wool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0F</td>
<td>0F ax succeed</td>
<td>1F uw2 food</td>
<td>2F xr repair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Syntax Checking

When BERT receives commands via his serial port, he checks each one for syntax and validity. If bad syntax or an invalid command is detected, BERT will honk and light up his eye. If this happens, reset the robot and check your program for errors (a favorite error is typing o instead of 0).
Table D: BERT's preprogrammed vocabulary. Each word is automatically terminated by the allophone "PAS" (04).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hex</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Hex</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Hex</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Hex</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>ZERO</td>
<td>4F</td>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>5E</td>
<td>LIKE</td>
<td>6D</td>
<td>START</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>ONE</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>CHECK</td>
<td>5F</td>
<td>LITTLE</td>
<td>6E</td>
<td>STOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>TWO</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>COMPUTER</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>6F</td>
<td>SORRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>THREE</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>COOKIE</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>MEMORY</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>SWITCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>FOUR</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>CORRECT</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>MOMMY</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>TALK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>FIVE</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>TEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>SIX</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>DO</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>THANK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>SEVEN</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>EDUCATIONAL</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>5D</td>
<td>IS</td>
<td>6C</td>
<td>SPEAK</td>
<td>7B</td>
<td>SILENCE</td>
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</table>

The BERTL language is also tolerant of the following characters: space, carriage return, and linefeed. While an error beep will not result from the preceding ASCII characters, nothing else will happen either. However, these characters must not come between the hexadecimal digits. For example, F44 L22H01 B1 7 E would be acceptable, whereas, F44 L22H01 B1 7 E would not. (In this example, the robot would go forward, turn left, honk once, and go backward.) I recommend that you make judicious use of subroutines to reduce your program's memory requirements. If something has to be done two or more times, use a subroutine. But bear in mind that no subroutine can call another subroutine. This is impossible due to the severely limited stack space of the OBC.

If you decide to use a word processing program to enter, edit, and transmit a BERTL program, be careful. A lot of word processors embed nonprinting characters (ASCII codes above 127 hexadecimal) in the text for their own purposes. If you are using WordStar, for example, always create and edit BERTL programs using the nondocument command. When "printing" your program to the robot, suppress page formatting.

The program shown in listing A will cause BERT to beep and say "hello." Following that, he will jog forward, stop and check his sensors, and then take appropriate action if any of the sensors is activated (low). If no sensor is activated (by bumping into some object), BERT will again go forward, stop, and check his sensors. If no sensors are activated throughout his journey, BERT will jog forward a total of four times, then finally stop and wait for either his nose or reset button to be pressed.

The appropriate action to be taken if a sensor is low depends upon which sensor is low. If the nose sensor is activated (by bumping into a wall, for example), then the subroutine NO1 will be called. This subroutine will cause BERT to say "sorry," then back up, turn to the right, and return to the main program.

Listing A: A sample BERTL program. Note: Do not try to enter the comments into BERT.

```
H01 T5C ; HONK ONCE & SAY "HELLO".
F0F ; GO FORWARD 15 UNITS, THEN
C30 ; IF SENSOR CONDITION "3" IS MET,
     ; CALL SUBROUTINE NAME0.
C51 ; IF SENSOR CONDITION "5" IS MET,
     ; CALL SUBROUTINE NAME "1".
C62 ; IF SENSOR CONDITION "6" IS MET,
     ; CALL SUBROUTINE NAME "2".
F0F C30 C51 C62 ; DO THE SAME THING AGAIN
F0F C30 C51 C62 ; AND AGAIN
F0F C30 C51 C62 ; AND AGAIN
N00 ; SUBROUTINE NAME "0" STARTS HERE.
T79 ; SAY "RIGHT", THEN
R09 G00 ; TURN RIGHT AND GO BACK TO MAIN
     ; PROGRAM.
N01 ; SUBROUTINE NAME "1" STARTS HERE.
T4A ; SAY "ALARM", THEN
B10 R06 G00 ; BACKUP 16 UNITS, TURN RIGHT AND
     ; GO BACK TO MAIN PROGRAM.
02 ; SUBROUTINE NAME "2" STARTS HERE.
T7B ; SAY "LEFT", THEN
L06 G00 ; TURN LEFT AND GO BACK TO MAIN
     ; PROGRAM.
E ; END OF PROGRAM.
```
through the air, as radio frequency energy. This RF interference can be picked up by any antenna in the vicinity, even the piece of wire connecting the hole sensor to the PIA. The PIA interprets these spikes as hole transitions and soon counts enough of them to satisfy the command parameter. BERT thinks he has traveled the required distance when, in reality, he has moved a short distance, or not at all.

If this noise causes problems for your robot, you might consider using shielded cable from the hole-sensor circuit to the connector on the motor driver board. If the problem persists, try increasing the size of filter capacitor C3 on the motor driver board.

If the LED does not illuminate at this point, check for pin 13 of the PIA going low. If it does not, your problem is likely the OBC. If it goes low and the LED refuses to illuminate, follow the signal from the PIA to the LED to find the circuit break.

If BERT has operated well up to this point, but has failed to turn, it is not likely that the problem is with the OBC. The guilty party is probably the motor driver board. To prove this, check the PIA’s pin 12 at the precise time in the self-test when BERT is supposed to be turning left. Pin 12 should be low. Follow this signal through to the motor driver board. If it arrives there, you have isolated the trouble to the motor driver board.

If BERT fails to turn right, the PIA pin to look for is pin 11. It should be low. To cause the motors to spin in a reverse direction, PIA pins 11 and 12 should be low, while pin 10 is high. If this is the case, but the motors do not reverse, follow these signals to the motor driver board. If they arrive there, the problem is in the board. If BERT successfully completes all the above movements but fails at one of the self-test points, you probably have an intermittent connection. Check your wiring and soldering.

Speech Board
Attempting the self-test without the speech board could get you into trouble as well. Since the OBC waits for the SBY signal from the speech board, it could wait forever (doing nothing else but waiting). To allow BERT to do the self-test without the speech board, short pins 39 and 40 of the PIA together.

If the speech board said “ready” when BERT was first powered up, but did not say “cookie” at this point, the most likely problem is an intermittent connection between the OBC and the speech board. Check all wiring.

The speech board produces sound in response to numbers sent by the OBC. These numbers are loaded into the speech board via a low-going pulse output at the PIA’s pin 39. Using a logic probe or oscilloscope, check for this pulse at the PIA, then follow it to see if it actually gets to pin 20 of the SPO256 speech chip.

To tell the OBC that it is ready to receive another number, the SPO256 outputs a low-going pulse on its pin 8. If this pulse is not output by the SPO256, check the power on the speech board (it should be +5 V). If power is okay, check all solder connections and look for bent IC pins. If this pulse is output by the SPO256, you must make sure that it gets to the PIA’s pin 40.

If all these handshaking signals come from and go to where they are supposed to, odds are that the SPO256 is working and the problem is in the LM386 audio-amplifier circuit.

Customizing
If you wish to modify BERT, please do. Any robot is only a beginning. Having built it yourself, you are the person best qualified to handle any modifications. My own personal BERT is an awful mess of add-ons and kludges. Perhaps someday I’ll clean him up and make those tem-
Pulling the Plug

Well, that's about all there is to it. If you follow all the steps in both parts of this article, you should have your very own robot—probably not the most elaborate robot ever featured as a construction article, but the most complete.

Everything, from hardware to software, is defined, debugged, and obtainable right now. Many configurations of BERTs are roaming around classrooms and basements (see photo 2). The first BERT users group has started here in Vancouver. You can correspond with them by writing to the Vancouver Robot Club, c/o Seaport Pacific Services Ltd., Suite 611, 470 Granville St., Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6C 1V5.

If you wish to receive a copy of their latest newsletter, send your address and $1 (don't send a stamped envelope unless the postage is Canadian). I wish you good luck with your BERT, and I hope that building and programming him provides you with the opportunity to enter the fascinating domain of robotics and artificial intelligence.

All parts for BERT are available from Amarobot, 2913 Ohio St., Richmond, Cl 94804, (415) 451-6780.
Imagine using a word processing and drawing program that lets you integrate charts and pictures that you "paint" or "clip" into your text. Well, if you use an IBM PC or Clone, now you can have graphically dramatic documents,

For Daisy Wheel, Dot Matrix & Ink Jet Printers

$89.95 Desktop Publishing Breakthrough

Imagine using a word processing and drawing program that lets you integrate charts and pictures that you "paint" or "clip" into your text. Well, if you use an IBM PC or Clone, now you can have graphically dramatic documents, from business or personal letters, to proposals, to organization charts, even with a daisy wheel printer.

Unfortunately, I couldn't have my graphics on the same page as my text.

Now, because this program can use the period on the daisy wheel to create all the charts and graphic symbols you see within this ad, I don't need to switch printers any more.

And while it doesn't create the graphics as fast as a dot matrix, the quality is superb. Now my graphics can be impressively integrated into my text.

Note: This program does not produce two column newsletters in a single action. Simply create a double length column and cut it when you have it printed.

No matter what printer you use, daisy wheel, dot matrix (with or without near letter quality printing) or ink jet (color or single color), you'll have powerful looking documents to really present your ideas in the most professional manner.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Desktop publishing is about the hottest category of computer programming. It seems that everyone has discovered the impact of combining text and graphics.

And very impressive presentations are just what Savtek's ETG Desktop publishing system provides for you.

Imagine leveraging the capabilities of your own IBM or Clone, your own printer and your own keyboard to produce the documents you see on these pages, with nothing else to buy.

THE 1000 WORD PICTURE

First a confession. I can't draw. That's why you don't see drawings in DAK's catalogs. But I've been amazed at how creative I can be with this paint program.

It's easy. You do everything with the arrow keys and the return key. By using the arrow keys you can draw in any direction with a choice of 12 brushshapes.

There's an erase function to eliminate anything you don't like. And here's my favorite function. UNDO is a function that works throughout this program.

...Next Page Please
You can copy or move a picture or even part of a picture right on the screen. So, draw it once and copy it or move it. But, here's my favorite. You can enlarge or reduce any picture or part of a picture right on the screen. So you can change its size equally, or you can stretch it out or make it tall and thin. Wow!

There are 12 included font/sizes. So you can have large or small text in your choice of styles within a picture or integrated with your text. And, each of the 12 font/sizes can be shown on the screen and printed normally, in bold, in italic, in outline, or in shadow. Plus, you can write normally across the page, up the page, down the page or upside down.

Finally, you can zoom into any small section of the screen and edit your pictures, pixel by pixel. With this kind of power, you don’t need to be an artist, just have the ability to push a button. You can operate this Paint program independently. Or, you can access any picture from within word processing.

So, for banners and pictures, you can print directly from the Paint Program. Or, for everything previously described, simply access your pictures, captions, graphs or charts through the desktop publishing section.

This program is incredibly powerful, you'll feel comfortable using it within just a few hours.

Every picture in this ad was created with this program. And, you haven’t even seen the tip of the iceberg of its capabilities. For example, if you have a picture of a screwdriver, you can copy the screwdriver and picture up and join them together.

Who Can Use the System

All you need is an IBM PC, AT, XT or 100% compatible with standard IBM CGA or EGA graphics capability. It must have at least 256K, and either two floppy disk drives or one floppy and a hard disk.

Below is a list of some of the dot matrix, ink jet and daisy wheel printers that have been tested with this program. If your printer is compatible with any of these printers, it should work too.

Special Note: With a color printer you can print 3 colors plus black text. C. T. Ink, Epson FX-80, FX-85, FX-105, FX-109 (color), LX-800, LX1000, MX200 with Graflex Plus or Graflex, RX-80, Hewlett Packard 225 SC Think Jet or QuickJet LaserJet, or LaserJet Plus, IBM 8080/85/86/87 Computers Graphics Printer, IBM Proprinter (IBM 3800, Monochrome, Tally Spirit 80, NEC 3500, 3510, 3520, 3530, 3550, 5500 series, 8023A, NEC Ponzitron PX31, PS3, P7, P5, (single or color), OMRON A, Xerography 93, Mich. w/IBM PC, Xerox Star Play, Micronet 150, 1 color), Panasonic KX-P1091, KX-P1091i Quadraem Quicknet (color), Radio Shack DMP-200, Silver Reed EXP 600, 600, 800 and all EXP series, Star Micronics SG-10, 10, 10 Series, 855, 845, Xerox (Color) 620, 630.

Final Facts

There’s a pop down calculator which lets you deposit your results right into your text. A clock/timer picks up the time from your computer, and there’s a 7,300 year calendar. They are available as pop-down windows. Savtek’s program is backed by a standard limited software warranty/license. It comes with a superb, easy to use reference manual.

Desktop Publishing for You

Risk Free

Make your ideas explode in front of your readers. When you send out a letter or proposal, let it be really dramatic. They will be your ideas, but you’ll be presenting them like never before.

If you’re not 100% satisfied, simply return it in unused condition within 30 days for a courteous refund.

To order Savtek’s ETG Integrated Word Processing and Graphics Desktop Publishing System for your IBM PC or Clone, call toll free or send your check for the breakdown price of just $89.95 ($95.95) Order No. 4801.

Look at the 12 sample pages I created. You’ll see graphs, pictures and charts mixed into my text. I even designed a logo for my newsletter. Just think about the impact you’ll make when you present your ideas with a combination of text and graphics. And oh, it’s so incredibly easy to use.

IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines.
Bad News For Escort

Dear Customer,

From Drew Kaplan

Escort has ignored DAK's second, one-on-one Maxon versus Escort radar challenge. And frankly, I'm fighting mad. I suppose they have a right to ignore me. But after referring to my challenge as only an "advertising gambit" and calling Maxon's radar detector an off-shore, primitive, and bottom-end unit, I'd think they'd be glad to wipe us out in a head to head duel to the death.

But, I'm really mad for two other reasons.

1. Mad Reason 1. Road and Track Magazine held an independent general radar detector test in their September 86 issue. As far as I can tell, Maxon beat Passport in Uninterrupted Alert, and Passport beat Maxon in Initial Alert. Now to be fair, neither of us seem to have beaten the other by even 2 seconds at 55 miles per hour. So, we didn't win or lose by much. And, that's the interesting thing is that Road and Track had nice things to say about Passport and even about Escort, which wasn't even included in the tests any more.

Now, if you've been following DAK's challenge, you know we've only been challenging Escort. If you've read Road and Track's tests, you'll be amazed when you see the test reports which I've reprinted for you to the right. What's really interesting is that it's the exact same person in both publications.

Actually, Maxon did extremely well. Road and Track only used 'over hill' and 'around curve' tests because on straight-aways the differences weren't worth describing. (Imagine that!) In view of the opinions stated in the article in Boardroom Reports, which I've reprinted for you, to the right. What's really interesting is that it's the exact same person in both publications.

But, I'm really mad for two other reasons and I think that you may be as fascinated by them as I am.

The CHALLENGE GROWS

In view of the opinions stated in the article in Boardroom Reports, about the $245 Escort, DAK hereby adds the $295 Passport to our challenge.

2. Mad Reason 2. Did you ever hear about the cure for dandruff that was developed in the middle-ages? It was the guillotine. And frankly, I think you should be aware of Cincinnati Microwave's advertisement cure for the Rashid VRSS Collision Avoidance System.

The Rashid VRSS system, as described in Popular Science magazine, January 1986, sends out a radar signal on the K band ahead of your car. The good part is that it can help you avoid running into things higher than your front bumper. The bad news is that since it operates on K band, it sets off radar detectors.

Well, hats off to Cincinnati Microwave. I've tested the Passport against the Rashid unit and, as usual, they've done a splendid job. While every other detector I tested, including Maxon's, was driven crazy, theirs didn't utter a peep.

But then, my Maxon hasn't uttered any peeps lately either and let me tell you why. I was on my way to the Far East to visit Maxon, so I asked Tom, a manager at DAK, to purchase and test the Rashid.

Well, did I ever hear from him. First the unit cost $558 plus about $100 to install. Then buying it and finding someone to install it took almost a month. But the real reason he was unhappy was that the recommended method of installation involved cutting a 6½' hole in the front grill of his neat new car.

Well, much to my wife's chagrin, it's now installed in her station wagon. After installation, it has to be set by an installer. He drives between 15 and 30 miles per hour toward a solid object. When the installer thinks he's reached a safe stopping distance, he adjusts the warning alarms to sound. Then in the future, when a similar distance is reached, lights will flash and an alarm will sound.

Of course, if you accelerate too quickly into a lane behind another car the same alarms can go off and, And, I haven't figured out what to do if there's a dog in the road, dirt on the radar sensor, or how to compensate for the different stopping distances encountered on dry, wet, snowy or icy roads.

A DIFFERENT FINGERPRINT

As far as I can see, Maxon beat Passport in Popular Science magazine, January 1986, sends out a radar signal on the K MOST IMPORTANT PART

Radar Detector ads spell out the obvious collision avoidance systems on the drawing boards and each may have a DIFFERENT FINGERPRINT.

So, if you're a current Escort or Passport owner, I suggest that you find out how many Rashid units there are and what Cincinnati Microwave will do about the 'other' units before you pay $$$ to have your current detector upgraded.

Besides, with over 3,000,000 square miles in the U.S., even 1,000 units would work out to less than one unit for every 3,000 square miles.

A $20,000 Challenge To Escort

Let's cut through the Radar Detector Glut. We challenge Escort & Passport to a one on one Distance and Falsing duel to the death on the highway of their choice. If they win, the $20,000 check pictured below is theirs.

By Drew Kaplan

We've put up our $20,000. We challenge Escort to take on Maxon's new Dual Superheterodyne RD-1 $99 radar detector on the road of their choice in one on one conflict. Even Escort says that everyone compares themselves to Escort, and they're right. They were the first in 1978 to use superheterodyne circuits and they've got a virtual stranglehold on the magazine test reports.

But, the real question today is: 1) How many feet of sensing difference, if any, is there between the two of the line Maxon Detector and Escort's or Passport's? And 2) Which unit is more accurate at interpreting real radar versus false signals?

So Escort, you pick the road (continental U.S. please). You pick the equipment to test the false signals. (Don't forget our $10,000 Rashid challenge). And finally, you pick the radar gun.

Maxon and DAK will come to your...Next Page Please
...Challenge Continued highway with engineers and equipment to verify the results.

And oh yes, we'll have the $20,000 check (pictured) to hand over if you beat us by more than 10 feet in either X or K band detection with the Escort, or by 2 seconds at 55mph with the Passport.

BOB SAYS MAXON IS BETTER

Here's how it started. Maxon is a mammoth electronics prime manufacturer. They actually make all types of sophisticated electronic products for some of the biggest U.S. Electronics Companies. (No, they don't make Escort's).

Bob Thetford, the president of Maxon Systems Inc., and a friend of mine, was explaining their new RD-1 anti-falsing Dual Superheterodyne Radar detector to me. I said, "You know Bob, I think Escort really has the market locked up." He said, "Our new design can beat theirs." So, since I've never been one to be in conflict. Now let me tell you about the new dual superheterodyne technology that lets Maxon leap ahead of the pack.

It's a technology that tests each suspected radar signal 4 separate times before it notifies you, and yet it explodes into action in just 1/4 of one second.

Just imagine the sophistication of a device that can test a signal 4 times in less than 1/4 of one second. Maxon's technology is mind boggling. But, using it isn't. This long range detector has all the bells and whistles. It has separate audible sounds for X and K radar signals because you've only got about 1/3 the time to react with K band.

There's a 10 step LED Bar Graph Meter to accurately show the radar signal's strength. And, you won't have to look at a needle in a meter. You can see the Bar Graph Meter with your peripheral vision and keep your eyes on the road and put your foot on the brake.

So, just turn on the Power/Volume knob, clip it to your visor or put it on your dash. Then plug in its cigarette lighter cord and you're protected.

And you'll have a very high level of protection. Maxon's Dual Conversion Scanning Superheterodyne circuitry combined with its ridge guide wideband horn internal antenna, really ferrets out radar signals.

By the way, Escort, we'll be happy to have our test around a bend in the road or over a hill. Maxon's detector really picks up 'ambush type' radar signals.

And the key word is 'radar', not trash signals. The test checks a system that operates in 1/4 second gives you extremely high protection from signals from other detectors, intrusion systems and garage door openers.

So, when the lights and X or K band sounds explode into action, take care, the competition is intense. But, using it isn't. This long range detector comes complete with a visor clip, hook and loop dash board mounting, and the power cord cigarette adaptor.

It's much smaller than Escort at just 3 1/2" Wide, 4 3/4" deep and 1 1/2" high. But, it is larger than Passport. It's backed by Maxon's standard limited warranty.

Not from Maxon. Use of radar detectors is illegal in some states.

2) Speeding is dangerous. Use this detector to help keep you safe when you forget, not to get away with speeding.

**CHECK OUT RADAR YOURSELF RISK FREE**

Put this detector on your visor. When it sounds, look around for the police. There's a good chance you'll be saving money in fines and higher insurance rates. And, if you slow down, you may even save lives.

If you aren't 100% satisfied, simply return it in its original box within 30 days for a courteous refund.

To get your Maxon, Dual Superheterodyne, Anti-Falsing Radar Detector risk free with your credit card, call toll free or send your check for just $999 ($4 P&H), Order No. 4407. CA res add tax.

Special Note: Now that we're challenging Passport, we've added an optional suction cup with windshield mount and extra coiled power cord. (Sorry we can't afford to throw them in for free.) They're just $59 ($1 P&H) Or. No. 4800.

OK Escort, it's up to you. We've got $20,000 that says you can't beat Maxon on the road. Your answer, please?

Escort and Passport are registered Trademarks of Cincinnati Microwave, Rashid VRSS. and Rashid Radar Safety Brake are registered Trademarks of Vehicle Radar Safety Systems, Inc.
Get a new handle on your business with SBT.

Now you can handle up to 254 users, all working in the same data files, with the SBT MultiNet Database Accounting Library. The accounting software written in dBASE III PLUS.

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dInvoice  Billing/Inventory Control  $295
dStatements  Accounts Receivable  $100
dPurchase  Purchase Order  $295
dPayables  Accounts Payable  $395
dPayroll  Payroll/Labor  $395
dLedger  General Ledger/Finance  $395
dAssets  Asset/Depreciation  $295
dProject  Project/Job Accounting  $395
dProperty  Tenant/Unit Management  $395
dMaterials  Material Requirements  $395
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Telex 9102404708

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An Adventure Authoring System

A tour of AdvSys, a tool for writing text adventure games

[Editor’s note: “Interactive Fiction as Literature,” a companion piece to this article, begins on page 135.]

dvSys is a system I designed for writing text adventure games. In adventure games, the player acts as an adventurer in a simulated world (real or imaginary). Players determine their own course of action by typing commands that trigger events in the simulated world.

You can approach the writing of an adventure game in many ways, and a number of books describe how to use traditional programming languages to write adventures. The most commonly used language is BASIC. But while you can certainly build very complex and interesting adventures using BASIC, it was not designed specifically for that purpose.

Much of the task of building an adventure game program consists of constructing complex data structures that model the game universe. BASIC has no convenient means for describing these data structures. Even Pascal, which is rich in data structuring facilities, has no easy means of constructing complex initialized data structures.

Another approach to writing adventures is to use a special language specifically designed for the purpose. This article describes such a language.

A language for writing adventures must have three essential features: a parser to handle commands typed by the player, an object-description facility, and a language for specifying the events that take place in response to the players’ commands.

David Betz is a BIX senior editor. He can be reached at BIX, One Phoenix Mill Lane, Peterborough, NH 03458.

Illustration by Nancy Doniger
Adventure games generally take place in a world made up of a network of interconnected 'locations.'

The Parser
The parser is responsible for prompting the player to enter a command. It must read the command from the keyboard and break it into pieces that can be digested by the action code. All commands are broken into one of five different types of phrases:

1. an actor phrase
2. a verb phrase
3. a list of direct-object noun phrases
4. a preposition
5. an indirect-object noun phrase

Not all of these phrases are present in every command, and the parser recognizes only a limited set of command forms. AdvSys recognizes these forms:

1. [actor] verb
2. [actor] verb direct-objects
3. [actor] verb direct-objects preposition
4. [actor] verb indirect-object direct-objects

where "direct-objects" is defined as:

direct-object [conjunction direct-object]*

(In this article, phrases within square brackets are optional. Phrases followed by an asterisk may be repeated zero or more times.)

The terms "actor," "direct-object," and "indirect-object" all represent noun phrases. Each noun phrase is of the form

[article] adjective* noun

In other words, a noun phrase consists of an optional article followed by zero or more adjectives followed by a noun. Here are some examples of noun phrases recognized by the AdvSys parser:

sword
the angry man
the thick red book

Now that we have defined the command forms that are handled by the parser, let's look at some complete commands. I will precede each example with a number indicating the form on which it is based:

1. Look
2. Fred, wake up
3. Drop the book
4. Take the sword and the orange vial
5. Give the book to the librarian
4. Librarian, give me the book
4. Show the librarian the book

The second example illustrates another feature of the parser. Verb phrases can consist of either a single word like "take" or a pair of words like "pick up" or "wake up." If a verb phrase consists of two words, the words do not have to be immediately adjacent to each other in the command. Either "Pick up the book" or "Pick the book up" will produce the intended result.

After breaking the command into phrases, the parser sets a small number of global variables to communicate the results of its work to the rest of the adventure system. The parser stores each noun phrase in an internal array, indexed by the noun phrase number. The index associated with the actor noun phrase is stored in the global variable $actor, the index associated with the first direct-object noun phrase is stored in the variable $object, and the index of the indirect-object noun phrase is stored in the variable $object. If a noun phrase is missing from the command, its corresponding variable is set to nil (which is the same as zero in this system). These noun phrase numbers will be used later to determine which objects the noun phrases refer to.

The parser uses the verb phrase and the preposition to select an action to handle the command. It stores the selected action in the global variable $action. (More details about actions later.) The adventure language statements you use to define the vocabulary used by the parser are:

(adjective word*)
(preposition word*)
(conjunction word*)
(article word*)

In addition, it is useful to define synonyms of some words. This is accomplished by the statement

(synonym word synonym*)

Objects
Adventure games generally take place in a world made up of a network of interconnected "locations." Each location has a set of exits that connect it with adjacent locations. The player explores the game world by moving an actor from location to location through these exits.

In the course of exploring these locations, the player encounters "things" and other "actors." In a fantasy adventure, for example, the player might encounter a magic sword or an angry dwarf.

AdvSys groups locations, actors, and things in the general category of objects. Each object in the adventure has an associated set of properties. Each property has an associated value.

A location object, for example, has a property for each of its exits. The values of these exit properties are the locations a player will reach by passing through the corresponding exits. Location objects also have description properties whose values are text strings describing the location under different circumstances. The concept of objects with properties is very general in this system, leaving you, as you write your game, free to invent new properties appropriate to a particular type of game and to define new classes of objects that share common properties, structure, and behavior.

For instance, a location object might be defined as:

(location living-room
  (property description "You are in the living room. \n" north library
     south entrance
     east dining-room))

This is a definition of living-room, a location object with the properties description, north, south, and east. The description property has the string "You are in the living room. \n" as its value. (A back slash followed by the letter n instructs the program to start a new line.) The property north has the value library (the location the player reaches when traveling north from the living room), the property south has the value entrance, and the property east has the value dining-room.

Things are objects that the player can manipulate. A thing must have a noun associated with it. And since the same noun can refer to different objects, you can associate adjectives with the objects to make references to the objects unambiguous. Here is an example of an object description:

(thing sword
  (noun sword weapon)
  (adjective red)
  (property description "a red sword"
    weight 20
    value 10
    initial-location entrance))

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This definition describes the object sword, which has the nouns sword and weapon and the adjective red. Thus, a player could refer to this object as "the sword," "the weapon," "the red sword," or "the red weapon."

The sword object also has four properties: description has the value a red sword, weight has the value 20, value has the value 10, and initial-location has the value entrance.

The weight property might be used to provide the player with a limited carrying capacity. If each object has a weight, you can prevent the player from carrying a set of objects whose combined weight exceeds the player's load capacity. Similarly, the value property could be used for scoring. Each object has an associated value that the game will add to the player's score when the object is carried to some specified location. The meaning of these properties is up to you, the game author.

Defining Objects

Actors are objects that represent characters in the adventure. The player controls a special actor that is the "player character." The player "sees" through this actor's eyes and takes part in the action by controlling this actor's movements. In AdvSys, the player character is called the "adventurer." Other actor objects represent nonplayer characters. These nonplayer characters are controlled by the adventure program (the code that you have written) rather than by the player, and they may include both friendly and hostile characters with whom the adventurer must interact to solve the adventure. An example of a nonplayer character might be

(actor troll
  (noun troll dwarf)
  (adjective angry)
  (property
    description "There is an angry troll here"
    short-description "an angry troll"
    initial-location "dungeon")

This defines a troll that the player can refer to as "the angry troll," "the dwarf," and so on, and is initially found in the dungeon, where the adventure will see the words "There is an angry troll here" upon entering.

So far we have seen how to describe the static portions of an adventure game. Location objects allow us to build the adventure universe, things allow us to place interesting objects in this universe, and actors allow us to populate the universe with other characters.

I have defined locations, things, and actors as part of a run-time package that comes with AdvSys, but you can define your own objects if you wish. The statements used to define these objects, as shown in the previous examples, are

(object object-type object-statement*)

where the object-statement may be defined using one of the following:

(noun word*)
(adjective word*)
(property [property-name initial-value]*)
(class-property [property-name initial-value]*)
(method [selector arg-name*] [aux tmp-name*] expression*)

Now we will explore how things happen in the adventure universe.

Handlers

All action within an AdvSys adventure is controlled by a set of "handler" and "action" procedures. There are five different handlers that are part of the main control loop. Each of these handlers contains user-defined code written in the adventure language. Figure 1 illustrates the control flow of the adventure system.

At the beginning of the game, the AdvSys interpreter calls the "init" handler. The init handler is responsible for printing any introductory text explaining the initial situation and for performing any initialization. Here is an example of an init handler definition:

(init
  (print "Welcome to the sample adventure!"
  nil)

This example handler prints a welcome message and sets the variable curloc (the current location of the adventurer) to nil.

The first handler in the main loop is the "update" handler, which is responsible for handling changes in the game state. If the player has moved to a new location, the update handler should print a description of the new location. Here is an example:

(update
  (if (not (= (getp adventurer parent)
               curloc))
      (setq curloc (getp adventurer parent))
      (send curloc describe))))

This handler checks to see if the adventurer's new location is different from the current one. If it is, the handler updates the current location and prints a description of the new location by sending the message describe to the new location object. (Note that on the first pass through the control loop, the update handler sees the location of the adventurer as being different from that stored in curloc and prints a description of the initial location.)

After the update handler has finished, the AdvSys interpreter calls the parser. The parser prompts the player for a new command, allows the player to enter the command, and parses the command according to the description above. The parser communicates its results to the remaining handlers by setting the global variables $actor, $action, $dobject, $ndobjects, and $object. If an error occurs during the parsing of the command, the system prints an error message, calls the error handler, and goes back to the start of the main loop (the update handler).

Assuming that the parser succeeds in parsing a syntactically valid command, the AdvSys interpreter calls the "before" handler, which handles any general preprocessing that needs to be done before the command-specific code is performed.

Next, the action associated with the player's command is performed. This is the action that was stored in the global variable $action by the parser. This code is responsible for actually carrying out the player's request (if it is allowed in the current situation).

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"after" handler, which handles any processing that must happen after the action is complete, such as updating the game clock or the player’s score, or anything that should happen only at the end of a successful turn.

The adventure language statements that are used to define handlers are:

(init expression)
(update expression)
(before expression)
(after expression)
(error expression)

**Actions**

The only part of the adventure system left to describe is the method for defining actions. Each action definition handles a specific command form and verb/preposition combination. Let's look at an example:

(action a-take (verb take get pick up) (direct-object) (code)
(setq %object (in-location $object))
(if (getp %object takeable) (progn
(if (send %actor carrying? %object)
(complain "You are already carrying the "
$object " ! \n"))
(send %actor take %object)
(print-noun $object)
(print "taken. \n")
(complain "You can't take the "
$object " ! \n"))))

This action definition handles commands like "take the lamp" or "pick up the sword." It handles any command with the verbs "take," "get," or "pick up" and at least one direct object. The code begins by determining to which object the direct-object noun phrase refers. The function in-location looks for an object in the current location (curloc) that matches the noun phrase it receives as its argument. The function returns the matching object or signals an error if no object in the current location matches the noun phrase.

Assuming that in-location finds a matching object, the action code assigns that object to the variable %object and then checks to see if it is possible to pick up the object. This is done by checking the value of the property takeable. If the result is true, the object may be taken. If not, the program prints an error message and the turn ends.

If the object is takeable, the code then checks to see if the player is already carrying it. It does this by sending the message carrying? to the actor object. This message checks to see if the object is currently being carried by the actor receiving the message. Both actor and location objects support the concept of containment. If the adventurer is already carrying the object, the program prints a message saying so and the action is complete. If not, the program adds the object to the adventurer’s inventory by sending the actor object the take message and the program prints a message indicating the successful completion of the command.

This example illustrates the use of object-oriented programming techniques in the specification of action code. AdvSys lets you define "methods" to handle messages sent to objects. Each message requests that the object perform some operation. The specific operation that is performed in response to a message is determined by a method definition associated with the object that receives the message. AdvSys supports hierarchical in-

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ADVENTURE AUTHORING

Table 1: The executable statements used in actions and handlers to control an adventure game written with AdvSys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(+ expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Add two numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(- expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Subtract two numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(* expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Multiply two numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(/ expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Divide two numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Remainder after dividing two numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&amp; expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Bit-wise AND of two numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(: expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Bit-wise OR of two numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&lt; expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Is expr1 less than expr2?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(= expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Is expr1 equal to expr2?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&gt; expr1 expr2)</td>
<td>Is expr1 greater than expr2?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(setq sym value)</td>
<td>Set the value of a variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(getp obj prop)</td>
<td>Get the value of a property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(setp obj prop val)</td>
<td>Set the value of a property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(and [expr]*)</td>
<td>Logical AND of a set of expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or [expr]*)</td>
<td>Logical OR of a set of expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not expr)</td>
<td>Logical NOT of an expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(cond [clause]*)</td>
<td>LISP style conditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(if expr then-expr [else-expr])</td>
<td>Traditional &quot;IF&quot; statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(while expr [expr]*)</td>
<td>Traditional &quot;WHILE&quot; statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(progn [expr]*)</td>
<td>Group expressions into a block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(return [expr])</td>
<td>Return from a function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(expr [expr]*)</td>
<td>Call a user-defined function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(class obj)</td>
<td>Get the class of an object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(send obj sel [expr]*)</td>
<td>Send a message to an object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(send-super sel [expr]*)</td>
<td>Send a message to the superclass of an object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(randomize)</td>
<td>Initialize the random-number generator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(rand expr)</td>
<td>Generate a random number between 0 and n-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(yes-or-no)</td>
<td>Prompt the user and accept YES or NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(print expr)</td>
<td>Print a string</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(print-number expr)</td>
<td>Print a number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(print-noun expr)</td>
<td>Print a noun phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(terpri)</td>
<td>Start a new print line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(match np obj)</td>
<td>Does this noun phrase match this object?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(finish)</td>
<td>Finish this turn (go to the AFTER handler)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(chain)</td>
<td>Exit this handler and go to the next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(abort)</td>
<td>Abort this turn (go to the UPDATE handler)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(exit)</td>
<td>Exit the adventure (back to DOS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(save)</td>
<td>Save the current game state to a file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(restore)</td>
<td>Restore the game state from a file</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inheritance of both properties and methods so you can define classes of objects that share the same property structure and behavior.

The default run-time environment for AdvSys adventures (contained in the file OBJECTS.ADI) defines methods that implement the default behavior for the built-in object classes. But the power of the system is that it lets you define subclasses of these default classes that implement either objects or classes of objects whose behavior and properties are unique to a particular adventure. This allows you to build on the existing classes rather than "reinventing the wheel." The default run-time environment is thus a framework for building an adventure rather than merely a sample program.

If a command contains multiple direct objects, the parser will store the first direct object noun phrase number in $doobject and the number of direct objects in $ndobjects. If your action code doesn’t touch the value of $ndobjects, at the end of the after handler, the system will assign the next direct object to the variable $doobject, decrement the count stored in $ndobjects, and loop back to the before handler again. This means that you don’t need to do anything special to handle commands with multiple direct objects. However, if you have a reason to want to handle all of the objects yourself, you can do so on the first pass through the action code and then set the variable $ndobjects to nil to prevent the system from looping back to handle the additional direct objects.

The adventure language statements used to define actions are:

```
(action name
  action-statement*)
```

with action-statement defined as one of the following:

```
(actor [flag])
(verb [word | (word1 word2)])
(direct-object [flag])
(preposition word*)
(indirect-object [flag])
(code expression*)
```

and where flag is one of the following:

```
required
optional
forbidden
```

Expressions
Handlers, actions, and methods all contain executable statements called expressions. The complete list of expression types allowed in AdvSys is shown in table 1 continued.
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1. Each of the forms shown computes a result, which is returned as the value of the expression.

Here is an example of an expression derived from table 1:

\[(\text{setq } x \; (\; (+ \; (\; \cdot \; a \; b \; \; ) \; \; \; (\; \cdot \; c \; d \; )\; ))\;\]

This executable statement is an arithmetic expression that multiplies \(a\) times \(b\) and \(c\) times \(d\), adds the two products, and stores the result in the variable \(x\). Even the \text{setq} form returns a value. Its value is the new value of the variable after the assignment is done.

**Run-Time Functions**

Not all of the functions that I have used in the examples are listed in table 1. The missing functions are part of the run-time package \text{OBJECTS.ADI} (see table 2) and are not built into the language. These functions are defined in adventure code and can be changed by the adventure author to suit a variety of tasks.

I wrote the run-time package so that you would not have to start from scratch when writing adventures. The run-time package defines commonly used object types such as locations, actors, and things; common actions such as look and take; game control commands like save and restore; and methods for handling common messages. These methods define the default behavior of objects, but can be easily supplemented or overridden by methods defined in ob-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASIC-THING</th>
<th>THING</th>
<th>Things that can be taken.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>superclass:</td>
<td>superclass:</td>
<td>basic-thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object</td>
<td>basic-thing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>initial location of the object.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Current location of the object.</td>
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<tr>
<td>sibling</td>
<td>Next object in the location.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methods:</td>
<td>methods:</td>
<td>(none)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(none)</td>
<td>(none)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTOR</th>
<th>The adventurer or non-player characters.</th>
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<td>Drop an object.</td>
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<td>methods:</td>
<td>methods:</td>
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<td>(none)</td>
<td>(none)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>PORTAL</th>
<th>Connections between locations.</th>
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<td>Key to lock and unlock.</td>
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<td>methods:</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cause this object to enter the location.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(close)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(lock key)</td>
<td>Lock the portal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(unlock key)</td>
<td>Unlock the portal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(exit directions)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(describe)</td>
<td>Describe the location.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>Locations in the adventure.</th>
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<tr>
<td>superclass:</td>
<td>superclass:</td>
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<td>visited</td>
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<tr>
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<td>First object in this location.</td>
</tr>
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<td>(exit directions)</td>
<td>Exits.</td>
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<td>methods:</td>
<td>methods:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(knock? obj)</td>
<td>Can this object enter?</td>
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<td>(describe)</td>
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Interactive Fiction as Literature

Adventure games have a literary lineage

Interactive Fiction

Adventure games have a literary lineage

Mystery Literature: Detection as a Game

Edgar Allen Poe would have loved IF; he was a master at solving cryptograms and thought problems, and he wrote the first detective story, "Murder in the Rue Morgue." Ever since then, mystery literature has been compared to games. The Sherlock Holmes stories, for example, have been called "crossword puzzles." Mystery novels like those of Agatha Christie and Dashiell Hammett are more like jigsaw puzzles, while James Bond novels and spy stories can be compared to games of chess.

Mysteries challenge the reader's powers of deduction; they are games in the form of stories, in which the reader competes with the author, matching wits in the game of "who done it" and how.

Some writers have even established mystery literature "rules" to make sure the competition between the reader and the characters, or the reader and the author, is fair. One set of rules that was set forth to give the reader a sporting chance requires that the author at least mention the crime early on in the story, that there be no more than one secret passage per story, and that no secret twin brothers or sisters may suddenly appear to explain the crime. To promote such fair play with the reader, the famous Detection Club (founded by G.K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, and others) requires new members to swear to the following initiation oath (see reference 1):

Ruler: Do you solemnly swear never to conceal a vital clue from the reader?
Candidate: I do.
Ruler: Do you promise to observe a seemly moderation in the use of Trap-Doors, Chinamen . . . and utterly and forever to forswear Mysterious Poisons unknown to science?
Candidate: I do.

Of course, fair play in no way hinders an author from trying to fool the reader; trickery and the ability to manipulate the rules to one's own advantage are admired qualities in gamesmanship.

As in mystery literature, the fascination of the intellectual challenge in IF may make up for weaknesses in characterization and style, which often suffer from the all-consuming goal of making the plot as thick as possible. In both IF and in detective literature, events and characters' choices are often not explained psychologically. In many mystery stories, the author simply establishes that the crime is puzzling, without providing any plausible motivation for it.

However, the suspense in mysteries can evoke total involvement and escape from our real-world problems. Because the reader is the detective and unraveller of puzzles in IF, and therefore more actively and intensely involved in solving the problems, IF can become a more powerful type of suspense and escape literature than current mystery literature.

IF and Adventure Literature

Crowther and Woods' Adventure is a story of exploration, like Jules Verne's Journey to the Center of the Earth. Both take place in caves, and many of the descriptions are similar. Perhaps surprisingly, the cave
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 descriptions in Adventure are often more realistic and vivid than in Verne’s story. Whereas Jules Verne explored only in his imagination, Willie Crowther is a real-life spelunker. Adventure began as a map, a computer model of an actual Colossal Cave in Kentucky, which Crowther explored and then accurately duplicated in the first few levels of Adventure’s cave.

Similarly, Adventure is related to Robert Louis Stevenson’s Treasure Island. The desire for treasure motivates both stories, and both were inspired by maps. Location and physical setting dictate the process of action. Stevenson once explained how he got the idea for his famous story:

I made the map of an island; it was elaborately and (I thought) beautifully coloured; the shape of it took my fancy beyond expression; it contained harbours that pleased me like somnss; and with the unconsciousness of the predestined, I ticketed my performance ‘Treasure Island’... as I paused upon my map of ‘Treasure Island,’ the future character [sic] of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods; and their brown faces and bright weapons peeped out upon me from unexpected quarters as they passed to and fro, fighting and hunting treasure, on these few square inches of a flat projection. The next thing I knew I had some papers before me and was writing out a list of chapters... the map was most of the plot. (See reference 2.)

Chivalry is Alive

Adventure, which was made possible by technological advancements in computers, is similar to the first “novels,” which were also dependent upon a new technology, the printing press. These novels of chivalry were prose versions of medieval knightly verse epics that, with the introduction of the printing press, could be mass-produced for a wide audience.

Compare Irving Leonard’s comments on the romances of chivalry to the reactions of Adventure lovers:

These tremendously popular works of fiction... stimulated the emotions and won the passionate devotion of all literate classes of Spain, from the great Emperor Charles V himself to the lowliest clerk in his service... The pages of this chivalric fiction were thumbed with an enthusiasm amounting to a passion... The aristocracy of every shade and degree, including its womenkind, and even the clergy, devoted much of their ample leisure to this diverting pastime.” (See reference 3.)

The prose novels of chivalry, which Cervantes satirized in Don Quixote,
Adventures authoring

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ADVENTURE AUTHORING

Around 330 B.C. Aristotle wrote

"The poet should choose probable impossibilities rather than incredible possibilities . . . if a poet does take such an impossible plot and appears to have handled it with some appearance of probability, the absurdity may be pardoned. Even the improbabilities about putting Odysseus on shore in the Odyssey would clearly not be tolerable if treated by an inferior poet. As it is, the skill of Homer conceals the absurdity and makes it pleasing." (See reference 6.)

Adventure's authors drew some of the content, characters, and motifs from science fiction and fantasy literature, especially from Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. Don Woods says that he had glanced at Tolkien's description of Orodruin (Mount Doom, the volcano in the Land of Mordor where the evil Sauron forged the One Ring of Power) before he wrote the "Breathtaking View" scene in Adventure. Tolkien says of Mount Doom,

...its ashen cone would grow hot and with a great surging and throbbing pour forth rivers of molten rock from chasms in its sides . . . some would wind their way into the stone plain, until they cooled and lay like twisted dragon-shapes vomited from the tormented earth. Sam beheld Mount Doom, and the light of it... now glared against the stark rock faces, so that they seemed to be drenched with blood.' (See reference 7.)

Compare this to the beginning of Wood's "Breathtaking View":

Far below you is an active volcano, from which great gouts of molten lava come surging out, cascading back down into the depths. The glowing rock fills the farthest reaches of the cavern with a blood-red glare, giving everything an eerie, macabre appearance.

How is Interactive Fiction New?

Although the story content of Adventure and other interactive works is related to established forms of literature, IF also differs from them on a very basic level—the reader's participation in creating the story and text makes the reader both a character and, in some sense, the coauthor of the story.

In IF, the nature of the text is also changed. The fluid computerized text allows a personalization and individualization of a literary work. The reader can talk to the text, and the text, in the form of the story's narrator, can talk back to the reader.

continued
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An acquaintance has calculated that the 'battery maze' in Adventure can be experienced in 187 billion trillion unique ways.

In conventional literature, a "gap" occurs when readers must interpret for themselves what the text means; the story is told, but its meaning is not. IF, however, contains not only gaps in meaning, but physical gaps in the text that the reader must fill in. These physical gaps in the interactive text allow such a wide range of explanations or interpretations of the fictional events taking place in Colossal Cave that it often seems as if different readers are not reading the same story. Some people play Adventure strictly as a game, while others read it as a straight story about exploring a cave and discovering the treasures.

Many, however, see Adventure as a story with deeper meanings. One player or reader believed the treasures in the cave were left by the good wizard of a long-vanished civilization, whose long-lost secrets would be revealed only when all of the puzzles in the cave were solved completely.

Another reader, a camper-backpacker, imagined that careless spelunkers had left the treasures in the cave. Yet another reader interpreted taking the treasures as stealing them.

The texts these three readers created were completely different because they read different stories into Adventure. This apparent drive to make context is a reflection in some ways of readers' psychological needs.

Some attempts have been made in more conventional literature to allow the reader choices about how a story unfolds, such as the "Choose Your Own Adventure" series. These books contain many story units; each lasts only a few pages and is complete in itself. At the end of a unit, either the story ends or you are given a choice and the story continues.

The artistic effects of these techniques fall short of those in IF, due to the linear nature of text printed on paper. In IF, you make choices about each individual step and construct the story units for yourself; the choices are not predefined.

The quantitative difference between the number of possible stories in computer-based fluid text and the printed texts is also great. In one printed book, The Cave of Time (see reference 8), for example, there are 56 possible stories. In Adventure, the number of different stories must be, strictly speaking, infinite, since you can travel in repetitive loops within the cave and type in any comment and elicit at least some response. Even without resorting to loops and nonsense commands, though, the number of distinct possible texts is astronomical. A scientist acquaintance has calculated that the "battery maze" in Adventure alone (which has 12 different locations, 11 of them connected to 9 or 10 of the others) can be experienced in 187 billion trillion unique ways.

The fluid nature of interactive text and its computer medium explodes the traditional literary concept of the individual authorships of a printed text. In some ways, the authorship and transmission of the interactive text is similar to those of oral literature. With a printed text, we generally have the idea that there is a single author who "owns" the text; copyrighting reflects our views about this. But in oral literature and IF, single, joint, multiple, communal, unknown, and anonymous authorships are common. Adventure, for example, was first written and released by William Crowther, enlarged and improved by Don Woods, and released again. There are now many versions of Adventure, and programmers often personalize the programs so that the dwarves have the names of their friends, enemies, or despised professors, for example.

Bringing Beauty to the Beast

For those who would like to write interactive fiction, a few suggestions and observations follow. I have based them on the scripts of the texts readers created while playing Adventure and on the varying degrees of enthusiasm the readers expressed in interviews when they discussed Adventure's literary qualities.

1. Provide a unified but open text. In traditional literature, almost everything of importance to the story itself is explained to the reader. If a cave bear were locked up in golden chains in a conventional story, the author would probably explain somewhere who locked it up and why. This doesn't happen in Adventure. You not only stumble in surprise upon the events; you never really find out what they mean. Unfortunately, in Adventure, they usually don't mean anything.

I would suggest that any text adventure writer make up a supra-story, that is, a story that explains every object and the behavior of every creature, even though you don't reveal this supra-story to the reader directly. The events will then have an inner coherence, but readers can project their own supra-story onto them, just as each person arrives at a personal meaning for a poem.

2. Take advantage of step-by-step buildups. "Breathtaking View" was the aesthetic highpoint of Adventure for many readers. From the first hint of rumbling in the distance, through the stifling passages with their trembling walls, to the stunning vision of the volcano, most readers were gripped with emotion. Not surprisingly, many readers felt let down when they found out that nothing happens at the viewpoint. This letdown was one of the aesthetic low points of the game. The lesson to be learned is, if you build up story tension, make sure something exciting happens!

3. Give the puzzles a moral quality. For many people, merely winning points for gathering treasures is not as emotionally satisfying as doing good and overthrowing evil to win the points or treasures. Most readers preferred using the treasures and doing something with them later on, not dragging them back to the surface to win points. For example, several people told me they thought the hungry bear bound with the golden chains was the most enticing problem because they were emotionally involved with it. They didn't want to hurt the bear, yet they were mildly afraid of it. When the puzzles have a moral dimension, it gives them emotional depth.

Although there is no moral basis to the text in Adventure or to the solutions of the narrative puzzles themselves, the reader practices reality testing as a principle of action, which can be useful when carried over into the real world. While playing Adventure, readers test their interpretation of the story and events many times over. If you can't solve a puzzle, you must face the fact that you don't have enough information, that you overlooked or misjudged the information you do have, or that your general view of the story might be wrong. You have to maintain a critical attitude toward yourself and the fictional situations you confront, even as you are making choices. Needless to say, this can be a useful philosophy of life.

4. Create a narrator with a unified personality and vision. The narrator of a story is the one who tells the story in the text. Readers know that whoever or whatever they are talking to has a personality. Sometimes it is peevish, petulant, or whining; sometimes it seems to laugh at the reader. Make sure that your game has a personality that is consistent
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Computers and Communications
from the reader's point of view.

You should also watch the narrator for consistency in what it does or doesn't know. For example, in Adventure, some readers seem confused as to whether the narrator knows the entire layout of the cave and is simply hiding it from them, or whether the narrator only knows about what it sees directly in front of it. They also are not quite clear about what the narrator is: a robot like R2D2, a computer like "HAL" in 2001, A Space Odyssey or some entity with feelings of its own. You don't need to explain the narrator to the readers directly, just make sure you've got a clear image of it in your own mind.

5. Test your interactive story on other people. Get as many people as you can, in as many combinations as possible to play or read your story for you. Then watch them and ask them questions, during or after the game. (Some people are not able to explain what they are thinking or get frustrated if they get interrupted while they're playing.) The most revealing interviews or readings are often made by two or three people playing together at once. Group players often discuss and argue about whose interpretation of the fictional events is correct. This is an excellent way of finding out the various ways people interpret the events.

Have the computer make a script of the game as it is being played, which includes both the game prompts and the reader's responses. After studying the scripts, you can modify your program to deal with players' commands and vocabulary that you hadn't considered before. For example, one Adventure player assumed that "lamp" meant "flashlight," while others thought of it as Aladdin's lamp. The authors were clever enough to prepare responses consistent with either meaning.

The Future of Interactive Fiction

The first interactive texts were written by programmers who thought of them mostly as games, and the literature they created is unsophisticated. The computer itself, however, does not limit IF to frivolous works. Consider the development of film. Early film was an unsophisticated medium, "so crude in its initial stages that it was considered to be beneath contempt" (see reference 9). Only with D. W. Griffith's "Birth of a Nation" and, later, Charlie Chaplin's films, did audiences become aware that film could transmit and aesthetically mature experiences.

Now interactive stories are being written by traditional authors with technical assistance from programmers. Perhaps it will take someone who is both a programmer and an author to explore the artistic promise of IF and create works of literature that rank with the classics of traditional literature.

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Introduction
Desktop Publishing

Very few developments in microcomputers have grabbed the attention of computer users quite like desktop publishing. In essence, desktop publishing gives you total control over the creation of the printed word. It provides a method for producing professional-looking documents without the need for outside typesetters and graphic artists. You can now write text, edit text, draw illustrations, incorporate photographs, design page layouts, and print a finished document with a relatively inexpensive computer and laser printer. Desktop-publishing systems can decrease the cost of producing documents and increase the flexibility for producing timely results.

But "desktop publishing" is a deceptively simple description for an extremely complex group of hardware and software tools. This new technology came about through a unique combination of existing technologies: faster personal computers, sophisticated word-processing programs, and laser printers based on photocopier technology. Practically every functional use of a microcomputer, from text processing to graphics manipulation to communications, is involved in the average desktop-publishing program.

John W. Seybold, a pioneer in the field of computer-aided typesetting and publishing, examines how desktop publishing has developed. His article "The Desktop-Publishing Phenomenon" describes how the development of the multifunction Altos workstation at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center, the Xerox Star computer, and the Apple Lisa led to today's crop of sophisticated computers and graphics environments. He also establishes the criteria for what he considers a useful "platform" for a desktop-publishing system.

Choosing the correct software is a critical step in building a desktop-publishing system. There is a bewildering hierarchy of programs, from sophisticated word processors to typesetting programs, page layout programs, and dedicated publishing systems. Some are designed for novice users or simple applications such as pamphlets or small newsletters. Other packages are designed for more technical uses, such as page composition for book publishing. Thom Holmes, in his article "Make My Page!," takes you through this jungle and gives you a specific set of guidelines for the selection of software. He describes the composition features to look for, examines the strengths and weaknesses of several page-composition packages, helps you decide between the Apple Macintosh and the IBM PC computers, and lists all available desktop-publishing packages.

Jon Barrett and Kirk Reistroffer give a behind-the-screen look at how the image you see on the screen eventually appears on paper. In their article "Designing a Raster-Image Processor," they take us through a generic electronic-publishing system. Starting with a screen display of characters, the authors explain how a bit map of the text is manipulated and how proportional spacing, kerning, and ligatures are handled by software and hardware. They describe several page-description languages and explain how a PDL can take a 75 dot-per-inch screen display and transform that into data for a 300-dpi laser printer. Finally, they explain how the raster-image processor takes this data stream and transforms it into pulses of laser light in the laser printer.

Some desktop-publishing products are being used in ways their developers never imagined. Denis G. Pelli, a visual psychophysicist, has developed a different way of using the page-description language PostScript. In "Programming in PostScript," Pelli describes how he realized that Postscript-based output devices, such as laser printers or typesetting machines, could be programmed directly and used to create graphic images from mathematical descriptions. Writing his own PostScript programs, Pelli has developed subtle graphics patterns that help him study how people interpret visual information. He shares his knowledge and PostScript code and shows how you can program PostScript-based output devices to produce your own graphics.

Jerry Pournelle once said that microcomputers are a hardware implementation of the First Amendment. Desktop publishing is certainly a new form of freedom of speech. It enables us to manipulate and distribute information more easily than ever before. Yet there is a price to be paid for this freedom. With total control comes total responsibility.

—Stanley J. Wizola, Technical Editor
EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS WHAT you mean when you say "desktop publishing," even those who have never used a computer. As a concept, it's compelling. As a product offering, it's the best thing that ever happened to personal computers. As a fillip for a market that—at least temporarily—had lost its momentum, it has been a godsend. As a harbinger of personal-productivity tools, it has been and will continue to be a prime example. Yet, in a sense, desktop publishing is a slippery product without a clear-cut definition.

The term is not old, and its origins are readily traceable. Paul Brainerd of Aldus, father of PageMaker, gets credit for coining the phrase. Apple Computer, looking for a vehicle to dramatize the Macintosh's capabilities, had the perspicacity to go all out on a promotional campaign. Without the Apple LaserWriter, desktop publishing would never have existed—desktop publishing didn't really make its debut until Apple announced the LaserWriter in January 1985. That was a short time ago, and a lot has happened since.

But the concept didn't just come out of the blue; an interesting history lies behind it. It originated in 1973, when an experimental multifunction workstation was developed at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center (PARC). That workstation, the Alto, was the most important unannounced computer product of the 1970s. It was conceived as a completely self-contained, single-user computer, although its principal mission was to communicate with other similar devices over the original 3-megabit Ethernet local network. Because its designers had graphics applications in mind, the Alto had a high-resolution bit-mapped display screen and a mouse-pointing device.

No one intended the Alto to be a widely used system. Each run of Altos was supposed to be the last, but by 1981 over 1200 had been installed on 46 Ethernet networks in seven geographic areas. Outside of Xerox, Altos were assigned to a few selected sites, including the White House, the House of Representatives, the Senate, a few universities (especially Stanford), and several undisclosed locations in the U.S. and Europe. The large base of users provided input as to what was right and what was wrong with the Alto and the various software packages that had been developed for it. These included Bravo, Gypsy, Markup, Draw, SIL, and Laurel—for text editing and formatting, creating pictures and diagrams, and providing electronic mail by means of a central file server.

Even more important, PARC alumni disseminated their fascination with this product, and the ideas it generated, throughout the computer industry—especially on the West Coast—wherever they took on new roles as key members of advanced development teams.

From the Alto came the Star, developed under the aegis of Dave Liddle, vice president of office systems within Xerox's Office Products Division, and announced on April 27, 1981. The Star perpetuated four key concepts. The first was "seeing and pointing" rather than "remembering and typing." "Progressive disclosure" reduced the apparent complexity of the system by presenting you with only the information relevant at that moment. "Uniformity of commands across domains" made system procedures consistent. Once you understood the basic logic of the machine, you could deduce what to do next without recourse to manuals. Last was WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get). The display on the screen should always be a close facsimile of the final printed document.

The Descending Star
The Star never reached any kind of ascendancy. It was poorly marketed, was too expensive, and lacked a reasonable output device. The 8044 Print Server, offered as an Ethernet peripheral, cost $30,000.

But Steve Jobs had visited PARC and saw it all happen. He enlisted the support of some of the Star's major developers and brought out the Lisa, a $10,000 desktop unit with a high-resolution bit-mapped display screen, a Motorola 68000 processor with a million bytes of memory, two high-capacity floppy disk drives, a 5-megabyte hard disk drive, a continued
The publishing process has suddenly become democratized and affordable beyond the fondest dreams of only a few years ago.

mouse, a user interface inspired by the Xerox Smalltalk system, and an impressively complete set of office application programs (LisaCalc, LisaGraph, LisaDraw, LisaProject, LisaList, and LisaWrite).

But the Lisa didn't have anything to write with that wasn't anticlimactic, even though its dot-matrix printer (with a standard resolution of 96 by 72 dots per inch) could move into a double-write mode of 160 by 144 dpi. The Lisa, too, was overpriced, ahead of its time, and not quite all there.

Still, the Lisa perpetuated the desktop metaphor of the Star and Alto. This metaphor is the origin of the "desktop" in desktop publishing.

The concept used almost all the screen to portray a desktop environment on which icons represented various familiar objects, images that you could point to and move about to make things happen. The Seybold Report on Publishing Systems, in describing this product in its January 31, 1983, issue, included a footnote that argued that, while some believe that the physical environment of an office needs significant change and shouldn't be emulated and "while we recognize many of the failings of the existing office, we also object to the arcane user interfaces typical of most computer systems... There can be no doubt that Lisa is different from many systems, and we are convinced that it is better than many systems because it uses icons."

Still, there was no desktop-publishing phenomenon. Nor did the phenomenon begin when Apple moved away from the Lisa and introduced the Macintosh in January 1984. It began in January 1985, when the LaserWriter made its debut. This $7000 plain-paper "typesetter" incorporated Adobe's RIP (raster-image processor) and Adobe's professionally designed fonts licensed from the International Type Face Corporation. Moreover, the event received the blessing of the most famous professional typesetting manufacturer: Allied Linotype (formerly Mergenthaler) threw tradition to the winds and embraced the technology, offering an interface, via Adobe's PostScript, to drive its Linotronic 101 and Linotronic 300 typesetters to produce truly professional output quality.

Aldus president Paul Brainerd had been in on the ground floor and played a role in persuading Apple that a typesetting application would be popular. The word "typesetting" is used in this context only because desktop publishing hadn't yet been invented, although with Aldus's PageMaker, and the hype that surrounded it, the term quickly emerged and conquered.

What Is Publishing?

As you can see from its history, the "desktop" part of desktop publishing was a product of the Xerox desktop metaphor, implying icons, bit-mapped screens, and the other features described above. The "publishing" part suggests that the LaserWriter would be more than a typesetter, since it could also serve as a final output device.

A typesetter produces only camera-ready copy from which printing plates are made, but you could use the LaserWriter to print multiple copies for distribution. This isn't very practical, however, because you'd want to print on both sides of the sheet (which is awkward), and the duty cycle of the LaserWriter won't support extensive emulation of a printing press.

"Publishing" also implies going beyond typesetting to produce graphics. While typesetting devices (now of the raster-image variety) have become increasingly capable of producing illustrative matter, this (with a few exceptions) was and is not commonly the way that graphics are reproduced. Generally, the platemaker or the camera operator combines graphics with text by stripping film onto the indicated page positions or double-burning illustrations onto printing plates that already contain the text.

Finally, "publishing" implies distribution to a readership. In its broadest sense, the word means to make known, presumably in a general way, to differentiate the activity from mere communications. Traditionally, publishing has implied the use of printing presses and paper, although today many publishers have ventured into nontraditional activities that make use of alternative media.

Thus, just as "desktop" is either too specific or too vague a term to provide a definitive description of the activity in question, so "publishing" is probably too ambitious or presumptuous. But the fact remains that the new technology has spawned a whole host of desktop publish-
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Third, the system should let you include graphics and output illustrative matter along with the text. This implies, for example, the existence of some sort of pagination or area composition program—not just what the industry calls "galley composition." This feature also implies that you can create graphics on your system, import graphics into the system, or both. Graphics features created within the system do not necessarily need to be produced by the same software that handles composition, but the relationship between the handling of text and graphics must be as seamless as possible.

Illustrations can be generated by business graphics programs that pull figures from a spreadsheet and convert them into bar or pie charts. They can be created by painting, drawing, or CAD programs, or be scanned in from a peripheral device such as a scanner. They can even be captured by means of a video camera. Or perhaps the pictures can be moved over from a digitized clip-art collection. The pictures need not be derived from photographs (continuous-tone images) and screened to become halftones for purposes of reproduction, but they might well be. The system should also provide some means, within itself, to perform a variety of manipulative tasks, such as sizing, cropping, image rotation, or enhancement.

Fourth, the system should offer some reasonably good editing capabilities. Ideally, you should be able to use the same kinds of editing tools offered by the best word processors and to make changes interactively, not merely to uncomposed text, but to text in the process of interactive composition. In other words, you want a system sophisticated enough to let you look at a composed page on the screen, identify a paragraph that needs rewriting, and make that change then and there, without reverting to some sort of input file. Whatever the system's capabilities are, desktop publishing clearly demands an effective editor as part of the package.

Finally, the system must be able to produce output on at least one device that offers a resolution of 200 or more (I would prefer to say 300 or more) dpi. Without this, you can't handle graphics, except a few bar charts and the like, and the quality of type doesn't deserve to be considered publishable. Beyond that, the system should interface to (or contain) one or more RIPs that work with PDLs (page-description languages) capable of producing a variety of outputs, including output to a high-resolution typesetter. This is the beauty of PostScript, Interpress, and Document Description Language as page-description languages. And this is what RIPs are for—the hardware and software necessary to interpret and translate that language into commands to drive the desired device.

Not all so-called desktop-publishing systems meet all the criteria outlined above. Some of them fail quite short. Even PageMaker was unable to perform automatic hyphenation until recently. Many program developers have never heard of kerning. Some programs use type-width values that are simply too gross to produce good-quality output. I believe that type-width increments as tiny as 1/216 inch are essential, and I would prefer much finer increments. This figure is based on the reasoning that an increment should not be less than 1/18 of a printer's em (a unit of measure based on a piece of type that is as wide as it is tall), and an em needs to be at least as small as six points (1/72 inch).

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DESKTOP-PUBLISHING PHENOMENON

low-cost computer chips: the advent of scanning and graphics packages, for example, and the ability to store a hyphenation dictionary in memory along with tables of width values and typesetting macros.

Another important technology was pioneered by Bitstream. It was able to transfer the art of type design into a computer science, and develop the contacts and initiative to get the rights to a library of classical type fonts and transform them into a database. The authority and persuasiveness of true type makes a significant difference between publishing and mere communications.

For many users, desktop publishing will end with laser-printer output. For others, such 300 dpi output, while a significant improvement over letter-quality daisy wheels, is the first step. The laser printer often furnishes merely the proofing copy, and then the output can be redirected to a true typesetting system, either convenient to the desktop of the user or by arrangement with a neighborhood trade typesetter.

Again I come back to the desktop. The implication is clear that the devices must be inexpensive, small, easily installed without the need for professional assistance, and easily maintained. One person should be able to easily take control of the entire process. He or she can learn and practice all phases of it, more or less intuitively, keep track of all the components within the system, and function effectively in a creative and a production environment to produce publication-worthy products.

Publishing Platforms

Although the Macintosh and the LaserWriter started it all, others soon got into the desktop-publishing act. The IBM PC was, in some respects, an ideal platform for the development of a desktop-publishing system because it is ubiquitous, powerful, and open. In other respects, the PC has been awkward and frustrating. Graphics capability does not come easily to it, and no intuitive and seamless way exists for the user to flow copy and graphics into and through the system.

When applied to the Macintosh, the term “platform” is easy to understand. It consists of a certain amount of hardware and a clearly understood set of operating conventions (with the aid of an RIP in the output device) to provide a platform for the development of application software.

But the PC has no comparable platform. You must specify what kind of graphics board is available, and, to get an appropriate environment, you need Windows under MS-DOS or GEM under its own set of conventions.

Nevertheless, in describing available systems, you will often hear of a PC platform as if it did exist. I would caution you to make sure that some degree of seamlessness is possible with the aid of the particular planks used to build the platform you choose.

In a sense, the IBM platform, despite its ambiguities, is more congenial for the development of future desktop-publishing applications than the Macintosh, simply because it’s more “naked” and can be clothed or ornamented more easily by clever designers. Some of the desktop systems for the PC platform are so powerful that it becomes impossible to draw a clear-cut distinction between desktop and professional publishing.

To draw such a distinction, once you are satisfied that all the typographical niceties are provided for, you have to look closely to determine whether you can “grow” a given desktop system for simultaneous use, in some sort of sharing and continued

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Inquiry 78 for End-Users. Inquiry 79 for DEALERS ONLY.
recent advances in microcomputer technology and the development of relatively low-cost laser printers have made it possible to use desktop computers in place of traditional composition systems for many publishing applications. Assembling a desktop-publishing system involves little more than buying a microcomputer, laser printer, and publishing software.

The most critical of these choices is software. It is also the most difficult choice to make because of the bewildering variety of publishing software available for microcomputers. The programs are designed for many different levels of users. Some are meant for novices and provide easy-to-use, although simplistic, WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) functionality; others are intended for technical people already familiar with composition coding and the extensive use of key commands.

In desktop publishing you use off-the-shelf hardware and software components, as opposed to turnkey systems that use proprietary software and special workstations. The basic components making up a desktop-publishing system include a personal computer, hard disk, high-resolution monitor, mouse or other control device, laser printer, and composition software. In addition, the system will probably include a word-processing program and any number of graphics programs for paint or draw functions. A final option, for incorporating existing images into documents, is a digital scanner.

Whether you choose an IBM PC, Apple Macintosh, or other hardware base for your system, the cost of a basic setup can run between $10,000 and $15,000. Publishing or composition software itself, which is the focus of this article, ranges anywhere from $200 to $8000, a range that is likely to close during the coming months as competitive packages begin to be more comparable. Tables 1 and 2 list IBM PC-based and Macintosh-based publishing packages and their distinguishing features.

Software Basics

All publishing software packages are not created equal. Some are designed to focus on one or two specific functions, while others are broad-based and provide a little bit of everything. Not many of the programs for microcomputers are strong in all areas. Among the features of these programs are text creation and editing; graphics creation and editing; interactive page layout using a mouse and a graphics display of the page; batch composition in which all pages are automatically composed according to preset page and typographic specifications; importing of text and graphics from other programs; true typographic control over hyphenation, justification, leading, kerning, and other features; automatic page numbering; and automatic repagination (renumbering of pages) once a document has been edited.

The heart and soul of desktop-publishing programs are the composition features—those elements that let you design a page format, control typographic specifications, and perform pagination prior to output. For this reason, most microcomputer publishing programs focus on composition features, rather than text and graphics features. The text and graphics elements of a publication are commonly created using programs other than the desktop-publishing package, and are imported into the publishing program at the time when pages are being composed. Keep in mind that, in addition to the publishing program itself, you will probably need to find compatible word-processing and graphics-illustration programs.

Publishing software for microcomputers is relatively expensive compared to the cost of software to which most users have become accustomed. Compared to the cost of using outside text compositors and typesetters, however, the software can pay for itself in less than a year. The programs make no particular demands on personal computers; they often require some extra memory and a hard disk drive, but these are features that many users already have.

Menu-Driven vs. Command-Driven

The two basic approaches to the design of publishing software for microcomputers are based on the two leading hardware products: the IBM PC and the Apple

Thom Holmes (1805 Underwood Blvd., Delran, NJ 08075) is director of the Office Automation and Microcomputer Publishing groups at Datapro Research Corporation, which recently introduced Datapro Reports on Electronic Publishing Systems, containing in-depth reviews of desktop-publishing software and larger publishing systems.
### Table 1: IBM PC-based desktop publishing packages and their features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vendor</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Hardware requirements</th>
<th>Imports from word processing programs</th>
<th>Import ASCII files</th>
<th>Continuous-driven Folio printing</th>
<th>Line drawing support</th>
<th>Size (words)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addison-Wesley Publishing Company</td>
<td>MicroTalk 150</td>
<td>IBM PC, XT AT 512K RAM</td>
<td>WordStar, MultiMate, XyWrite</td>
<td>WordPerfect, OCA, XyWrite</td>
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<td>Aldus Corporation</td>
<td>PageMaker 10 for the PC</td>
<td>IBM PC AT or compatible, EGA or Hercules graphics card</td>
<td>WordStar, MultiMate, Adobe PageMaker</td>
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<td>Alphatype Corporation</td>
<td>Work Station III-PC 41</td>
<td>IBM PC, XT AT 640K RAM, hard disk Hercules graphics card</td>
<td>WordStar, MultiMate, Adobe PageMaker</td>
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<td>Ameritech</td>
<td>Merlin III 200</td>
<td>IBM PC AT or compatible, 16-megabyte expandable memory, math coprocessor, 30-megabyte hard drive, high-resolution, color monitor</td>
<td>WordStar, VI Text Editor</td>
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<td>Award Software</td>
<td>Laser Page 5204</td>
<td>IBM PC or compatible</td>
<td>WordStar, MultiMate</td>
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<td>BestInfo</td>
<td>Superpage 20</td>
<td>IBM XT, AT or compatible, 640K RAM, Hercules graphics card</td>
<td>WordStar, MultiMate, Adobe PageMaker</td>
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<td>Compugraphic Corporation</td>
<td>PFS Composer 10</td>
<td>IBM PC, XT AT or compatible, two drives (one must be 360K disk)</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, XyWrite</td>
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<td>CyberResearch</td>
<td>CyberType CyberMerge 13</td>
<td>IBM PC, XT AT or compatible, Hercules adapter, 5MB RAM</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, Adobe PageMaker</td>
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<td>Data Transform</td>
<td>Phontex 2.4/Fontex 2.8</td>
<td>IBM PC or compatible, 256K/512K CGA-supported printer (Fontex)</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, Adobe PageMaker, PFS-Write</td>
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<td>G.O. Graphics</td>
<td>DeskSet 10</td>
<td>IBM PC XT AT or compatible, dual disk drives or hard disk, 512K RAM, Hercules card</td>
<td>WordStar, MultiMate, Adobe PageMaker, DisplayWrite</td>
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<td>Itek Graphic Corporation</td>
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<td>IBM PC XT AT or compatible, hard disk, Hercules graphics card</td>
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<td>Lexsoft</td>
<td>Spectravel Desktop Publisher 6.2</td>
<td>IBM PC or compatible, w 256K RAM and CGA/EGA, Hercules Vector Multimode or ABT 6000 graphics card</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, Adobe PageMaker, PFS-Write</td>
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<td>Magna Computer Systems</td>
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<td>DisplayWrite, DCA, WordStar, MultiMate, WordPerfect</td>
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<td>IBM XT AT or compatible, hard disk, 512K RAM, Hercules, CGA, EGA or MDS Genius Graphic</td>
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<td>IBM PC or compatible, 256K RAM, DOS, 2048K, hard disk</td>
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<td>The Gutenberg Laser Composition System 20</td>
<td>IBM PC XT AT or compatible, 512K RAM, hard disk</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, Adobe PageMaker, PFS-Write</td>
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<td>IBM PC XT AT or compatible, 256K RAM, Hercules, CGA</td>
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<td>Personal Text</td>
<td>PC TEX 20</td>
<td>IBM PC or compatible, 10-megabyte hard disk</td>
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<td>IBM PC XT AT or compatible, 512K RAM, math coprocessor and graphics card</td>
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<td>IBM PC XT AT or compatible, 512K RAM, Jupiter or Junior Plus card, EGA, Hercules or Genius Display System</td>
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<td>$695</td>
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<td>Apple LaserWriter, PostScript printers</td>
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<td>HP LaserJet Plus, LaserJet Cordata 300A, LaserMaster OASYS</td>
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<td>scanner</td>
<td>Linotype VTP 201, 100, 300, 100P</td>
<td>Apple PostScript, Teora Genesis</td>
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<td>Linotronic 100, 202, 300, Siemens, Autologic, Compugraphic</td>
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Table 2: Macintosh-based desktop-publishing packages and their distinguishing features.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vendor</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Hardware requirements</th>
<th>Imports from word processing programs</th>
<th>Size (words)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Addison-Wesley Publishing Company</td>
<td>Texture 1.0</td>
<td>Macintosh 512K, two 80K drives minimum</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, Microsoft Works, MacWrite</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aldus Corporation</td>
<td>PageMaker 2.0 for the Mac</td>
<td>Macintosh 512K w/ external drive, Mac Plus</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, MacWrite</td>
<td>90,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boston Publishing Systems</td>
<td>MacPublisher III 1.0</td>
<td>Macintosh 512K w/ external drive</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, MacWrite</td>
<td>90,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTL Systems</td>
<td>MacTeX 2.0</td>
<td>MacTeX Plus, any PostScript laser printer</td>
<td>Microsoft Word, MacWrite</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letraset USA</td>
<td>ReadySetGo 3.0</td>
<td>Macintosh, 512K RAM or 256K with Switcher</td>
<td>MacWrite, Microsoft Word</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megahaus Corporation</td>
<td>Megafont 2.3</td>
<td>Macintosh 512K</td>
<td>MacWriter</td>
<td>90,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megahaus Corporation</td>
<td>Megafont 2.3/Megafiler</td>
<td>Macintosh 512K</td>
<td>MacWrite</td>
<td>90,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microsoft Corporation</td>
<td>Word for Macintosh 1.0</td>
<td>Macintosh or Macintosh Plus, 128K RAM</td>
<td>MacWrite</td>
<td>90,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>PS Publishing</td>
<td>PS Compose 1.0</td>
<td>Macintosh Plus</td>
<td>MacWrite</td>
<td>90,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type/Setting Net/Work</td>
<td>StyloType II 1.11</td>
<td>Macintosh</td>
<td>MacWrite</td>
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</table>

Macintosh. Programs written for the IBM PC tend to be command-driven and appeal to the more technical end user, while Macintosh programs are menu-driven and appeal to nontechnical people. There are exceptions to these rules, but for the most part, software seems to fall into one of these categories, which have relative advantages and disadvantages. Menu-driven programs are easy to learn, interactive, and appeal to nontechnical users, but they can lack full composition functionality, have both limited text formatting and typographic options, and are often slower to use than command-driven programs.

Command-driven programs can offer a high level of composition functionality, extensive text formatting and typographic options, and faster response time. Thus, they will appeal to technical people and those already familiar with composition. However, they can have commands that are difficult to learn and remember, and they do not always employ interactive page makeup using a graphics display.

When examining a program, you should consider the level of technical expertise of the intended users as well as your requirements for interactive page makeup using a graphics display.

The following is a brief discussion of some of the relative advantages of Macintosh-based publishing software versus IBM PC-based programs. Most of the time, the program's capabilities are directly tied to the machine's capabilities.

The Macintosh Platform

High-resolution, easy-to-manipulate graphics are the Macintosh's forte, and the user interface provided with the Macintosh operating environment is by far its biggest virtue. Publishers of desktop-publishing software have used this interface to their best advantage, predominantly relying upon the mouse and limiting keystrokes to a few commands. Macintosh programs generally make it easy for you to import text and graphics and to arrange these elements in the document.

Macintosh-based programs can, however, present problems for more demanding users. In a business setting, for example, although some of these programs can serve for many internal applications, none seem to have all the features necessary to produce true typeset-quality documents. These programs cater to ease of use and let you produce nice-looking documents quickly. But often the Macintosh programs cannot produce camera-ready output and generally do not permit composition of a lengthy document.

The early market leaders in the electronic-publishing software market for the Macintosh include PageMaker from Aldus, MacPublisher from Boston Publishing Systems (formerly Boston Software), and ReadySetGo, developed by Manhattan Graphics and sold by Letraset. All three packages can import text and graphics from other Macintosh programs such as Microsoft Word, MacWrite, and MacPaint.

The packages differ in the way they let you design a page, the type of tools they offer, and so on. For example, PageMaker lets you decide how many columns you want, and you can then adjust column sizes with a mouse. ReadySetGo is less interactive but more precise: You tell the system exactly how big you want a
column to be by typing in a size. ReadySetGo can also repaginate automatically, a feature missing in PageMaker.

PageMaker was originally the most expensive of the three major publishing applications for the Macintosh—at $495, it cost nearly two and a half times as much as MacPublisher or ReadySetGo, even though PageMaker did not at the time offer a proportionately larger number of features. Still, it became the leading seller for the Macintosh. All three programs currently feature many more professional composition features than they did in 1986, with consideration finally given to hyphenation, page numbering, kerning, and leading.

The IBM PC Platform

Desktop-publishing packages available for the IBM PC appear to place emphasis on producing text-based documents. In keeping with the system's features, IBM PC-based packages tend to be command-driven systems that can provide full composition functionality. This feature is attractive to composition professionals but does require that you have some familiarity with the operating system. One feature lacking in text-only composition systems is the ability to merge graphics with text.

Perhaps the most capable of PC-based publishing programs is Ventura Publisher from Xerox. Built upon the GEM desktop environment, Ventura Publisher combines a screen-based WYSIWYG interface with "style sheets" that let you determine the exact specifications for any page, paragraph, image, or other element by choosing from a menu of predefined "tags."

Text files written or changed from within Ventura Publisher can be saved and used by word-processing programs—a unique feature and a good one if you want to archive text and use it again.

Finally, the recently released version 1.1 of Ventura Publisher is compatible with a variety of page-description languages such as PostScript, Interpress, and DDL. Ventura can produce output on Apple's LaserWriter, the HP LaserJet and a host of other printers. At $895, Ventura is more expensive than other PC-based packages but is considered by some to rival expensive dedicated publishing systems produced by companies like Interleaf.

Aldus Corporation has begun shipping an IBM PC-based version of PageMaker that is similar in look and feel to the Macintosh version. PageMaker PC uses the MicroSoft Windows environment to support a mouse and interactive WYSIWYG page makeup.

MagnaType, from Magna Computer Systems, is one of a small number of packages available for use on a personal computer that act as a front end for an actual typesetting system. Its ability to compose text or import it for composition further narrows the field of competition. Deskset from G.O. Graphics and PC-Type from Modtek are typesetting composition programs that compete with MagnaType, but Magna has the reputation and exposure that these other packages lack. MagnaType's capabilities reside in its ability to drive a wide variety of typesetters as output devices and to take advantage of the composition features of these machines. As a typesetting software package, MagnaType has few peers.

continued
Some documents such as newsletters or brochures can be done page by page, which is handled best on an interactive graphics display.

Bestinfo's Superpage is a high-end desktop-publishing system in the same league with MagnaType as a typesetting composition package. However, Superpage offers a greater degree of display interactivity than other typeset composition packages. This ability to see what you are designing is important for newcomers to text composition or typesetting.

Superpage also lets you design forms precisely, an important feature if you plan to read data off of the form with an optical character reader (OCR), which often requires precise alignment of material. The program's filing capability lets you keep track of the text files with which you are working, which version you are using, and so on. All these features are important in producing composed documents, especially to the inexperienced user. In comparison, MagnaType is much more code-intensive for these functions.

Frontpage (formerly Do-It) from Studio Software is an IBM PC-based desktop-publishing program that is easy to use and takes advantage of a mouse. Those intimidated by any command-driven software might gravitate toward packages such as Frontpage. Frontpage allows for professional-looking typeset-quality text and also permits a degree of manipulation in terms of the location and size of the text. Although considered a low-end typesetting package, Frontpage has a relatively high price (compared to the more capable systems mentioned above) when you take into consideration the add-ons it requires.

If you have already invested in an IBM PC and HP LaserJet printer, the package of choice may be Lexisoft's Spellbinder Desktop Publisher. This composition software package lets you graphically depict a made-up page before outputting it. Lexisoft was the first to offer this feature at a relatively low cost.

Like most desktop-publishing programs, Spellbinder Desktop Publisher lets you incorporate into your publication any file created on another word processor as an ASCII file. Although this can also be said of the typeset composition packages from Magna and Bestinfo, these are several times more expensive.

Word Processor as Publisher

Word-processing programs are limited in what they can do to affect text size, appearance, and layout. Composition programs, on the other hand, are designed to manipulate the size and style of characters as well as the placement of copy and graphics on the page. Finding a powerful word processor to serve as a front end to the composition program is as important as selecting the publishing package itself.

A number of IBM PC-based word processors are well suited to interface with composition software. Microsoft Word, for example, has more flexibility in selection of fonts and more detail in spacing and margin specification than its competitors; it will convert files from other formats; and, perhaps most important, it will store page formats for later recall—an important step toward publishing periodical material.

The Macintosh version of Word is alone in its competitive class. MacWrite is its only serious competitor at the wordprocessor level, but early versions of MacWrite were more of a beginner's word processor than a package for the prolific writer.

The MS-DOS version of Word has a distinct advantage in output flexibility. It offers a greater choice of output devices, which gives you a variety of configuration options. The ease with which you can choose different fonts encourages creative use of type in Word documents, an important aspect of publishing. And the MS-DOS version of Word is easy to learn and use.

Word's biggest challenger appears to be WordPerfect from WordPerfect Corporation (formerly Satellite Software). The programs have similar capabilities and are very popular with professional writers.

Another popular word processor is XyWrite III. As a text-processing system that supports minimal graphics and can drive a laser printer for the production of newsletters and manuals, XyWrite III compares favorably with Word and WordPerfect. It is also less expensive.

As a microcomputer-based text generator for composition systems, XyWrite has no competitors. XyWrite's compatibility with almost every other system in the composition-systems market has made it the most popular text-processing package for microcomputers in the publishing industry. It has become the program of choice for people in the composi-
### Companies Mentioned

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<th>Address 2</th>
<th>City, State, Zip</th>
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<tr>
<td>Addison-Wesley Publishing Company</td>
<td>1 Jacob Way</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading, MA 01867</td>
<td>(617) 944-6795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aldus Corporation</td>
<td>411 1st Ave., Suite 2100</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seattle, WA 98104</td>
<td>(206) 622-5500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alphatype Corporation</td>
<td>7711 N. Merrimac Ave.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Niles, IL 60648</td>
<td>(312) 259-6800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amgraf Inc.</td>
<td>1501 Oak St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kansas City, MO 64108-1424</td>
<td>(816) 474-4787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award Software Inc.</td>
<td>130 Knowles Dr.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Los Gatos, CA 95030</td>
<td>(408) 370-7979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bestinfo Inc.</td>
<td>130 South State St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Springfield, PA 19064</td>
<td>(215) 891-6500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston Publishing Systems</td>
<td>1260 Boylston St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Boston, MA 02215</td>
<td>(617) 267-4747</td>
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<tr>
<td>CyberResearch Inc.</td>
<td>5 Science Park Center, P.O. Box 9565</td>
<td></td>
<td>New Haven, CT 0633</td>
<td>(203) 786-5151</td>
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<tr>
<td>CyberText Corporation</td>
<td>702 Jefferson Ave., P.O. Box 3488</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ashland, OR 97520</td>
<td>(503) 482-0733</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Transforms Inc.</td>
<td>616 Washington St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Denver, CO 80203</td>
<td>(303) 832-1501</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTL Systems Inc.</td>
<td>234 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 205</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 1K5</td>
<td>(416) 487-2142</td>
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<tr>
<td>G.O. Graphics</td>
<td>18 Ray Ave.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burlington, MA 01803-4721</td>
<td>(800) 237-5588</td>
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<tr>
<td>Itek Graphix Corporation</td>
<td>34 Cellu Dr.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nashua, NH 03063</td>
<td>(603) 889-1400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letraset USA</td>
<td>40 Eisenhower Dr.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paramus, NJ 07653</td>
<td>(201) 845-6100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lexisoft Inc.</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1950</td>
<td></td>
<td>Davis, CA 95617</td>
<td>(916) 758-3630</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magna Computer Systems Inc.</td>
<td>14724 Ventura Blvd.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Oaks, CA 91403</td>
<td>(818) 986-9233</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megahaus Corporation</td>
<td>5703 Oberline Dr.</td>
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<td>San Diego, CA 92121</td>
<td>(619) 450-1230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Microsoft Corporation</td>
<td>16011 Northeast 36th Way</td>
<td></td>
<td>Redmond, WA 98052-6399</td>
<td>(206) 882-8080</td>
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<tr>
<td>Network Technology Corporation</td>
<td>6825 Lamp Post Lane</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alexandria, VA 22306-1321</td>
<td>(703) 765-4506</td>
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<tr>
<td>New American PagePlanner Inc.</td>
<td>One Maple St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>East Rutherford, NJ 07073</td>
<td>(201) 933-4868</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal TeX Inc.</td>
<td>12 Madrona Ave.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mill Valley, CA 94941</td>
<td>(415) 388-8853</td>
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<tr>
<td>ProSoft</td>
<td>7248 Bellaire Ave.</td>
<td></td>
<td>North Hollywood, CA 91605</td>
<td>(818) 765-4444</td>
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<tr>
<td>PS Publishing</td>
<td>290 Green St., Suite 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>San Francisco, CA 94133</td>
<td>(415) 433-4698</td>
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<tr>
<td>The 'Puter Group</td>
<td>1717 West Beltline Highway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Madison, WI 53713</td>
<td>(608) 273-1803</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scenic Soft Inc.</td>
<td>100 Second Ave., South</td>
<td></td>
<td>Edmonds WA 98020</td>
<td>(206) 776-7760</td>
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<tr>
<td>Software Channels Inc.</td>
<td>1320 Young St., Suite 301</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4T 1X2</td>
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<td>Software Publishing Corporation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mountain View, CA 94043</td>
<td>(415) 962-8910</td>
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<tr>
<td>Studio Software</td>
<td>17862-C Fitch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Irvine, CA 92714</td>
<td>(800) 821-7816</td>
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<td>Typesetting Network Inc.</td>
<td>161 Vine St., P.O. Box 5279</td>
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<td>Reno, NV 89513</td>
<td>(702) 322-1884</td>
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<tr>
<td>TYX Corporation</td>
<td>11250 Roger Bacon Dr., Suite 16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reston, VA 22090</td>
<td>(703) 471-0233</td>
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<tr>
<td>West End Film</td>
<td>1825 Q St. NW</td>
<td></td>
<td>Washington, DC 20009</td>
<td>(202) 232-7733</td>
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<td>WordPerfect Corporation</td>
<td>266 West Center St.</td>
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<td>Orem, UT 84057</td>
<td>(801) 227-4404</td>
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<tr>
<td>Xerox Corporation</td>
<td>101 Continental Blvd.</td>
<td></td>
<td>El Segundo, CA 90245</td>
<td>(800) 822-8221</td>
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<tr>
<td>Xyquest Inc.</td>
<td>3 Loomis St.</td>
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From $250.00

**Guidelines for Selecting Software**

Before looking for a desktop-publishing program, you should ask some questions. First, what user interface level do you desire? Are the users nontechnical or technical people? If you prefer using a mouse or similar pointing device, the number of programs to choose from narrows.

What programs will be used to create text and graphics? They must be compatible with whatever publishing program you select.

Does the application call for graphics capability? Knowing specifically the kind of graphics you require will greatly aid in selecting software. Some programs let you draw or construct graphics from within the program. Others allow merging with externally produced illustrations and even scanned images. More common are packages that simply allow holes or windows for inserting photos or illustrations after the text is composed.

Is networking a need or possible need? Is the page makeup performed interactively or in a batch mode? Some short documents such as newsletters or brochures can be done page by page, which is best done with an interactive graphics display, while long documents that have a strict predesigned format can best be made up in an automatic batch mode that puts text files into the desired page layout.

Will the program automatically produce a table of contents and/or an index of your document? Can the program create equations as graphics elements in a document? Does the program provide footnoting capability?

These features separate the good, the bad, and the ugly in desktop-publishing software. By answering the questions about your application and then applying the answers to table 1, you can be confident that the program you buy will do the task you have in mind with a minimum of headaches.

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**MAKE MY PAGE**

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The text contains a paragraph that describes the functions and features of the Dream Board, a piece of hardware. It mentions that the Dream Board combines the functions of three popular enhancement boards—multifunction board with EMS. It is designed to fit into a single expansion slot. There is also a mention of programmer's paradise, which offers a variety of software products, including overlays, linkers, compilers, and other tools. The text also includes information about postal addresses, toll-free numbers, and product availability. The overall context suggests a focus on software and hardware offerings, with an emphasis on compatibility and ease of use.
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- AT-style keyboard
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- 1MB BIOS
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- Hard Disk Floppy controller for AT®

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- 1.2MB floppy disk drive $135
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- AT-style keyboard, 5/51
- 80286-8 microprocessor
- 12MHz operation
- 1.2MB TEAC floppy drive
- Hard Disk Floppy controller for AT®

### HARD DISK FOR PC, XT & AT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>HDD Type</th>
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<td>725MB/25 ms</td>
<td>Toshiba</td>
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**SCSI-286 FULLY CONFIGURED AT® SYSTEMS**

**SCSI-286m**
- Mono AT® System $1215
- Basic system as described above, Hercules compatible monochrome graphics card, with Primes port

**SCSI-286s**
- The 286 Steal with 20MB HD $1699
- Basic system as described above, 20MB HD
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- Special EGA 20MB HD $1895
- Basic system as described above, 20MB HD, fully configured, EGA/CGA compatible monitor, EGA color display card with parallel port, fully assembled and tested before shipping

### GRAPHICS DISPLAY CARDS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graphics Card Type</th>
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### MULTIFUNCTION CARDS

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<td>Turbo XT Westem Digital (chipset) Hard Disk controller</td>
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<td>Runs on 12 MHz AT®</td>
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### MEMORY CARDS

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<td>Short card</td>
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### OTHERS

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<td>Everex Edge</td>
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<td>Microsoft Compatible</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD/Floppy controller</td>
<td>$100</td>
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Designing a Raster-Image Processor

The road from screen display to hard copy is circuitous

Jon Barrett and Kirk Reistroffer

ASKING THE QUESTION “How do you drive a laser printer?” is less like “How do you drive a car?” than like “How do you drive to Cambridge?” The question “How do you drive a car?” has a fairly specific and uniform answer having to do with using a steering wheel and two or three floor pedals. But “How do you drive to Cambridge?” depends on where you are starting from and whether you want to take the fast or the scenic route. Similarly, “How do you drive a laser printer?” depends upon where you are starting from and what kind of results you expect.

Despite this, some generalizations can be made about the aims and methods of driving laser printers. In this article we will talk about a generalized front end for a raster-image processor (RIP) and explain how what shows up on-screen finally shows up on a laser-printer output. First we will describe some of the page-description languages (PDLs) important in the desktop-publishing world. Then we will explain how RIPs work in general. Finally, we will discuss our approach to the hardware and software necessary to drive a laser printer, with emphasis on what we think are some innovations in the technology.

In our generalized example of an electronic publishing system (EPS), we have several aims. First, we want it to show on-screen what will appear on paper. That is, we want a WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) system. Second, it must generate sophisticated graphics, allow easy revision of them, and display them on-screen. Third, it must allow for mixing typefaces and sizes on any one page, preferably without limit. Fourth, it must allow mixing of graphics and text, preferably without any limit on complexity. Fifth, it must be able to print out, with fidelity, all that the user has created. Sixth, the quicker it can do this, the better.

To accomplish these aims, we need several components. The front end on the host computer must let you create documents of arbitrary graphic and typographic complexity. Second, documents must be translated into a PDL, a series of commands which a laser printer can “understand.” Finally, the system must have hardware that takes the digital information describing the page and turns it into modulations of the laser, causing the image to appear on the paper. This hardware is called a RIP. (A raster, or raster-scan image, as used in the context of computer graphics, is a two-dimensional array of pixels.)

It might seem that the process of getting the document’s image onto the CRT screen is essentially the same, from the logical point of view, as getting it onto paper. To a certain extent, that is correct. The image on paper and the CRT image are both views into the same database, in this case a document. But several issues arise that distinguish the two processes. Chief among these are the questions of hardware and resolution dependence. Most EPSs have opted for some form of independence in both regards. That is one reason why PostScript is so popular; a PostScript description of a page will theoretically produce the same page, given differences in resolution, on any PostScript output device. Thus, EPS software designers can write a single driver for their system and have confidence that it will produce accurate printed pages when hooked up to a variety of printers. The chief disadvantage is that this dependence prevents an EPS from taking full advantage of a specific output device.

In fact, as we shall explain in our design we opted for some limited device and resolution dependence. This means that we do not have to pass parameters with enough information to drive a typesetter at 2000 dots per inch if we are in fact driving a 300-dpi laser printer. This optimizes for data compression, which can improve the printer’s total throughput. This is especially true when the communication channel is relatively slow, as in the case of the 9600-bit-per-second AppleTalk line used by Apple’s LaserWriter. Obviously, a resolution-dependent system demands more initial work from the designers. Also, our device dependence enables us to hand-tune fonts for the particular printers we support, optimizing them for legibility and style.

The question of machine dependence is not academic. For example, some laser printers write to white and some write to black. That is, some consider the image
Hand-tuning fonts for specific printers can enhance legibility and style.

But to understand how RIPs and PDLs have evolved the way they have, it is necessary to know a little about the short history of laser printers.

History of Laser Printers

Although laser printers have been around since the mid-1970s, they were text-oriented and in the $500,000 price range. Thus, when Canon introduced the LBP-10 laser printer in 1979 for $10,000, it caused a great deal of excitement.

The first laser printers using the Canon engine, while exciting, were inadequate for the needs of the generalized EPS that is our example. They did support downloaded fonts, but they did not have sufficient graphics capabilities. For example, they could not fill an arbitrary polygon.

Then, in 1981, Imagen introduced a laser printer with an important advance. To compose an entire page before printing, you need enough memory to hold data about each of the dots to be printed, about a megabyte’s worth for a 300-dpi printer. At that time, a megabyte was expensive. So Imagen figured out a way to print full pages without having the entire page in memory. This technique was implemented in their RIP. The Imagen technique was clever. It internally considered a page to consist of a matrix of “postage stamps,” each of which it could compose in real time. If a “stamp” were text only, it would create the raster image on the fly. If the data were part of a large, uniform area, it would take one “stamp” and replicate it, saving memory.

This was an improvement over the Xerox laser printers of the time, for while they could print as much text as wanted on a page, virtually the only graphics they would print were horizontal and vertical lines for tables. But the early Imagen laser printer could not print pages with very complex graphics. And it did not do clipping. (To clip an image is to crop off selected portions of it.) Also, the amount of memory available too severely limited the number of vector lines that could be printed. (Vector-line graphics is a method for drawing graphics using straight lines. Each line is usually described by its end points.) This is an important limitation when your set of geometric primitives does not include circles and arcs, so curves have to be represented by hundreds or even thousands of vector lines. Finally, because the letters were logically ORed into the graphic “stamps,” the printer could not produce white text on a black background: Assuming that a set bit is one that prints, ORing a set and a reset bit results in a set bit.

Previously available laser printers, such as the Hewlett-Packard LaserJet, were very popular although not the most functional. They could handle text adequately but did not shine when it came to complex graphics. The latest generation of laser printers from Hewlett-Packard, Imagen, and other vendors has overcome many of the limitations of earlier models, in large part because memory has become cheap enough to make large memory boards that can hold a full-page bit map. The memory generally consists of at least 1.5 megabytes. Of this, about 1 megabyte is for the page bit map, and the other 0.5 megabyte is for temporary storage, variables, and cached fonts. (Cached fonts are, in essence, fonts downloaded from the host computer or computed from outlines.)

In addition, ROMs are available that may contain font bit maps that the printer will use to compose the text on a page whenever the PDL has told it to insert some characters. The ROM’s bit map is compatible with the printer’s resolution if the PDL is device-independent. Most printers in this class offer between 1.5 and 2 megabytes of memory. Improved software has enabled these printers to produce pages of considerable complexity.

Putting the Image on Screen and Paper

The main section of an EPS program, which puts the characters on the display screen, is fairly standard. The basic display loop for our generalized EPS has to grab the bits that compose the character and put them into an arbitrary place in memory, typically a screen buffer dedicated to the task. To draw the character quickly, you may need to grab the largest chunk of data you can at a time. Our imaginary computer uses the Motorola 68000 that has a 16-bit data bus. Thus, the most data available for grabbing in any one cycle is 16 bits. These bits are then moved into a two-dimensional array.

This would be fairly straightforward if you were dealing with monospaced text, since each character would then occupy a bit map of the same size. But our generalized EPS does not. It provides on-screen proportional spacing. Further, there is the problem of kerning letter pairs in which one character hangs over another as in the case of the letters VA or italicized lower case f’s (see figure 2). (Some systems treat some commonly kerned pairs, such as ff, as single bit maps. In traditional typography, such pairs, occupying a single piece of type, are called ligatures.) To achieve this, you cannot

**Figure 1:** With write-to-black printers, black pixels are written to a white background. With write-to-white printers, white pixels are written to a black background. The resulting fonts can appear substantially different, as in the case of the sans serif f’s shown here. Hand-tuning fonts for specific printers can enhance legibility and style.
treat each character as occupying an inviolable rectangle. Rather, you must logically OR bit maps that intersect. When you OR them, all bits currently set in the destination bit map remain set, while those set in the intersecting source bit map next set the appropriate bits in the destination bit map.

This solves the problem of displaying bit-mapped, proportionally spaced characters on-screen. But the 300-dpi resolution of a laser printer is four times greater than the approximately 75-dpi resolution of workstation display screens, which means the printer has 16 times the number of dots per page. Although the algorithm is basically the same, because it is 16 times the data, the job is slower.

The problem is how to blit, that is move or logically OR a source bit map of a glyph (i.e., a bit map that contains a character or a symbol, typically one that will be reused) into the destination bit map (screen or printer). ("Blit" as a verb comes from BLT, an acronym for bit boundary block transfer.) As an example, let's take a simple case such as blitting the letter A. If the source is an array one word wide, we want to write this to a destination that is also one word wide. But remember that we are dealing with proportionally spaced text. Thus, glyphs will not necessarily fall on word boundaries in the destination. With a 16-bit word (which is the size of the word we actually deal with), the chances are only 1 in 16 that the glyph will fall on the boundary. Thus, our problem is writing a glyph that is one word wide to a destination where it will straddle two words. (In general, if \( n \) is the width of the glyph in words, the problem will be to write it to a destination \( n + 1 \) words wide.)

The basic loop for a software blit (see figure 3) consists of the following steps: First, you get the source word, then shift it right to reflect the offset from the destination's word boundary. Next, get the destination word. OR the shifted source and destination word, and write it to the destination. Get the source word again (or keep it in a register), then shift it left to reflect the offset. Get the destination + 1 word. OR the shifted source and destination + 1, and write to destination + 1.

The second access of the source word is necessary to take care of any portions of the source bit map that run over into a second word space.

Document to PDL
We now have some characters on the screen. How do we get them to the printer? Remember that what is written to screen and what is written to the printer are two views of the same document. This document, at least the text portion of it, is one-dimensional. In putting it on the screen, the EPS software has to make decisions about how to bring it into two dimensions: where should the line breaks continue

![Figure 2: Unkerned italicized f's, shown on the left, each occupy an inviolate rectangle. Kerned letters, on the right, overhang each other, complicating the bit-mapping algorithms.](image)

![Figure 3: To move the source bit map row by row into the destination bit map (which can straddle word boundaries), each row must be shifted by the offset from the word boundary. In this case, the offset is six. In this example, kerned italicized f's are shown, but the problem can occur with any letter. This figure uses 8-bit words to simplify the diagram.](image)

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be, where should the page breaks be. In non-WYSIWYG systems, such as batch systems, those decisions are made after all editing has been completed. In a WYSIWYG system, those decisions have to be made on the fly to keep the screen updated. This can be a daunting task, since inserting a single letter while editing can cause a sentence to drop onto the next page, setting off pagination ripples throughout the document. Further, some EPSs (such as Interleaf) provide on-screen hyphenation, which means that after you type each word-terminating character, you have to check the preceding character string against a dictionary to find the hyphenation points. (You can use an algorithm in lieu of a dictionary.) In a true WYSIWYG system, those problems have been solved, and document integrity is maintained at all times. No post-editing formatting is required to prepare for printing. But you cannot simply ship bit maps over the screen to get the printer to work, if only because that would grossly underutilize the printer's ability to produce relatively high-quality output.

A variety of techniques have evolved, but the fundamental steps are the same. The PDL must generate the commands to tell the printer which fonts to use. (If it does not have fonts stored, describe the fonts by sending bit maps or mathematical descriptions of them.) The PDL then generates the commands to tell the printer where to place the characters. It describes the graphics and takes care of bookkeeping chores, such as sending an end-of-page command when appropriate.

The first step is for the host to translate the document into pages that can then be described by the PDL. (In our generalized EP, pagination is done in real time; some older-generation systems require a separate pagination process after editing is complete.) If the system designers want to be able to deal with several different sorts of printers and PDLS, they might decide to have the host generate an intermediate language sufficiently generic to be intelligible to various PDLS. The intermediate language might also be optimized for graphics. For example, a circle can be described in various ways, including treating it as a polygonal shape, using coefficients, or giving its center and radius. The intermediate language might optimize for data compression by describing the circle in the way that requires the least data, while still providing sufficient data for various PDLS to reconstitute it accurately.

It is perfectly possible, and not uncommon, to use no intermediate language at all. But in a network environment it is useful to separate the different phases of the translation from document to PDL, and consequently intermediate languages become more important. For example, if the document's host emits an intermediate description of the page, the printer server can translate it into the specific PDLS of the various printers it might service. Thus, one server can drive several different sorts of printers. Also, the intermediate language can be optimized for data compression, which is especially important when operating in a network environment.

Page-Description Languages

At the moment, several PDLS are vying to become the standard, although there is even debate about whether a standard is desirable. The two best-known ones are PostScript from Adobe Systems and Interpress from Xerox Corporation. A more recent contender in the standards fray is Imagen's Document Description Language (DDL). PostScript seems to be gaining ground in the low-end desktop-publishing market. For example, PostScript drives the Apple LaserWriter. Interpress might prove to be more adept at dealing with very high speed printers such as the 120-page-per-minute Xerox 9700. DDL is a strong contender, especially since Hewlett-Packard has announced that it will support this language in some future products. One such product is a low-cost RIP that can be added to IBM PC AT systems to turn a previously installed LaserJet into a full-functionality text and graphics printer. Finally, RIPrint is the PDL we designed; we will discuss it later (see reference 1).

Interpress

Interpress was created in 1982 by Robert Sproull and William Newman at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center. It remained for internal use only until 1984, when some versions were made public. Interpress is a tokenized language, within which documents are represented in an encoded form. Each variable is preceded by a length field so that the interpreter knows in advance how much data the current token requires to be read from the input stream. This facilitates the transmission of documents quickly and reliably over a network without recomposition. This is an advantage for demand publishing on high-throughput printers, but for most users the benefit seems small.

The body of an Interpress document contains the characters to be printed and printing instructions as to the desired appearance of the document (e.g., whether continued...
A new Alsys cross-compiler permitting Ada programs to be written on an IBM-PC AT and executed on an IBM 370 was introduced at the November Ada Expo in Charleston, W. VA. The cross-compiler, pre-validated to AJPO test suite 1.7, is priced at $2,995 and includes a 4 MB RAM board.

Two compilers, the Alsys validated PC AT self-hosted compiler, and the AT-to-370 cross-compiler, are offered as an option at $4,995. One RAM board serves both compilers.

The cross-compiler, and especially the two-compiler option, implements a "distributed programming" environment for which the Ada language and its "package" concept is particularly suited. The two-compiler option permits developers to program in Ada and test their results at their workstations before uploading 370 object code to the mainframe.

Alsys also introduced its PC AT debugger called AdaPROBE at the Expo. AdaPROBE combines a unique AdaVIEWER with regular debug facilities.
DDL can produce both a user-readable and a tightly encoded form.

to print on two sides, and how to stack it in the printer). The document creator can determine and alter the coordinate system at any time, affording a measure of device independence. Generally, Interpress documents do not carry with them bit maps of characters. Bit-map images are supported for printers with resolution of about 300 dpi (the standard for low-end laser printers). Publicly available Interpress printers support limited transforms on characters, permitting, for example, rotations of only 90 degrees.

PostScript
Adobe was formed in late 1982 by John Warnock and Charles Geschke, both of whom left Xerox to design PostScript. The first PostScript-based laser printer, the Apple LaserWriter, became available in the spring of 1985.

PostScript is an interpreted language for describing, in a device-independent fashion, the way in which pages can be composed of characters, shapes, and digitized images in black and white, gray scale, or color. PostScript characters are produced by specifying a font name and size. As with Interpress, the creator can determine and alter the coordinate system at any time. Because PostScript is a rather rich programming language, a PostScript program is likely to specify graphics objects in some normalized, parameterized form and apply an appropriate transform, derived from the parameters, to the object before committing its image to the page. It is completely user-readable, in 7-bit ASCII form. For this intelligibility, however, you pay a performance price in lower communications throughput.

When dealing with complex pages (a function of the amount of detail in the page), PostScript is severely limited. For every change in font or size, the printer must compute a bit map from the outline font (unless that font is cached). The bit map is preserved (so it does not have to be recomputed) until memory runs short; then it is discarded to make room for new bit maps. The result is that complex pages that contain text print slowly. The same is true, but more so, for pages that contain complex graphics. For example, The Seybold Report on Publishing Systems (the major independent industry source) reported that a map of the United States took 13 hours to typeset using PostScript. Further, the maker of the typesetter defended its performance by saying that this was because the user had encoded the graphic poorly. When the typesetter company recoded it, it still took six hours to output (see reference 2).

Document Description Language
The designers of DDL sought to avoid what they regarded as the bad design features of Interpress and PostScript, while incorporating the good. For example, DDL can produce both a user-readable and a tightly encoded form. The first allows more rapid application development, but the second allows faster host-to-printer communication.

Also, DDL has the graphics richness of PostScript, but produces document description (as opposed to purely page description) facilities, as does Interpress. This latter facility is important for making intelligent spooling systems that might need to know about page size, fonts needed for the entire document, where the page data ends, and so on. This kind of capability is so useful that Adobe Systems promulgated a PostScript "comment convention" by which a PostScript creator can indicate these parameters in a standard way. In effect, this convention is a recognition of PostScript's inability to deal with certain problems that arise when printing a document.

Digits to Dots: RIPs
Now that the PDL has transmitted the information describing the page, the RIP must decode the information and translate it into instructions for the printer.

The basics of a RIP are fairly uniform. In the simplest case, such as with the original Apple LaserWriter RIP, the RIP takes input, uses instructions in ROM to compose a page bit map in RAM, and then outputs it line by line through a video output section.

Let's look at this a little more closely (see figure 4). The input section receives a page description from a host computer. As the page description comes in, the 68000 CPU interprets the PDL, using the interpretation code in ROM, and generates a page bit map in RAM. When the bit map is ready, the 68000 reads a word and sends it to a shift register in the video section. The video section sends the contents of the register to the printer as a raster, much like a television signal, over a single line. The contents of the register control the laser, which in turn places the dots on the paper, producing the end result you see.

The entire operation is under the control of DDL.
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A RIP needs memory for three purposes: to store code, to store glyphs, and to act as a page buffer.

trol of a 68000 CPU. In the case of Apple, data is sent either serially or through AppleTalk. The CPU handles all handshaking and timing details for inputting from the host, composing the bit map according to the ROM-based specifications, and outputting through the video section to the printer itself.

RIP Innovations
So far, we've described a generalized picture of how RIPs work. Getting more specific, we'll discuss the Interleaf RIP in particular and look at some hardware modifications that improve performance. By describing them, we can present the next level of detail in RIP technology.

In our design, we decided to allocate the RIP's memory dynamically. A RIP needs memory for three basic purposes: to store code, to store glyphs, and to act as a page buffer. While it is tempting from the hardware point of view to segregate memories (reflecting the analytic, segmented nature of most hardware design), we had reasons for leaving the memory unsegmented.

First, having separate memories for each function can require complicated memory circuits. Also, with a minimum of 2 megabytes of dynamic RAM, not only can a second 8-by-11 inch page be composed while the first is printing, but with dynamic memory allocation, the same RIP can also print 11-by-17 inch pages by using the second megabyte for the oversize page's composition. Similarly, if you need a huge amount of font storage for some task, the memory is there to be allocated.

The bit map is made by a series of reads and writes. The reading and writing occupy much of the RIP's processing time required by the 68000 CPU. Therefore, we decided to add a hardware assist in the form of a blitter.

The 68000 can address up to 16 megabytes of memory. The Interleaf RIP has 3 megabytes installed so that it can compose the next page while the current page is being printed. Because this leaves the upper 2 address bits unused, we can use these bits to select the memory's mode. The most significant bit of the address is used to select the blit mode. When the hardware sees this bit set, it knows to address the existing 3 megabytes, but in the blit mode. The data is shifted to the right, inverted, and then put on the write-enable pins of 16 dynamic RAMs. This process is then repeated for the second word, except with a shift to the left and with the memory address incremented (see figure 5). Both writes are done in one write instruction. The data input pins on the RAMs during this process may all be zero. If one set to one, the result is an OR. If zero, the result is a KO, or knock out (i.e., every one in the source data results in a zero in RAM).

This is a direct OR to memory, done in one cycle. It speed up the drawing of glyphs and bit-map images by a factor of eight. A character of up to 32 by 32 pixels that are not word-aligned, for example, may be ORed to the bit map in less than 200 microseconds.

The word-boundary offset (n) arrives via its own special hardware path. The 68000 cannot address particular bits within words in one cycle, which is precisely what we need it to do. So we created a special bit-address register that contains, in 4 bits, the information necessary to address a bit within a word.

The system also has direct-memory addressing for the output to the printer, for the input from the host, and for refreshing the dynamic RAMs used. The DMA output to the printer can also be used to clear the bit map, saving approximately 0.25 second of processor time per page. To enable this function, the DMA controller uses an otherwise undefined function code when it reads the data from the
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memory for the printer. This function code causes the memory controller to do a read-clear cycle rather than a read cycle. If you want multiple copies of a page, the bit map is not cleared.

These changes in design make a RIP capable of printing pages of great complexity at very high speed.

Software Decisions

Interleaf also designed its own document description language (Printerleaf), comparable to Interpress in many of its design considerations, and its own PDL (RIPrint) to take advantage of the design of our RIP. The design considerations are, we think, illustrative of the challenges PDLs create.

We knew that the output from our electronic publishing software would be directed toward a wide variety of printing devices, ranging from laser printers to typesetters. Thus, we decided that the most flexible approach was to provide printing systems capable of supporting device and language independence so that documents could be transparently directed toward many existing and to-be-announced printers. Also, we recognized that many users would want to direct output to a choice of printers in an office setting that might contain various printers roughly in the same class (e.g., 300-dpi printers). In such a situation, you do not need device independence with the performance penalty it inevitably exacts (e.g., passing 2000 dpi's worth of information to a laser printer capable of only 300 dpi).

Further, we decided our PDL would be resolution-dependent, although the code would be device-independent. By making it resolution-dependent, we hoped to gain speed, quality, and control. We would gain speed because we would not have to go through the complicated algorithms necessary to translate a generic, resolution-independent, mathematical description of a font into bit maps; we would download the bit maps directly and save transmission time for lower resolution printers. In short, resolution dependence means more work at our end but produces qualities users desire.

The overall RIP software design allows for any selection of PDL interpreters to be either resident on, or downloaded to, the RIP. The RIP software is divided into the low-level RIP system interface and the higher-level PDL interpreters. The lower-level software provides communications services, print-engine interface services, memory management services, and access to functions such as bit(), which might have hardware support. This layer of software shields the PDL interpreters from any particular hardware implementation dependencies. It also modularizes the software, easing ports to new RIP hardware implementations and adaptation to new print engines.

Our PDL, RIPrint, includes an extensive set of commands for drawing on the page, as well as controls for the printer. A RIPrint file is actually a series of immediately executed commands. Because they are immediately executed, not buffered, there is no limit to the number of commands you can use to describe a page.

The commands are encoded in binary, not ASCII. This results in compact code and efficient machine-to-machine transfer; the time savings can be orders of magnitude. If the most significant byte is set, the byte is considered a high-level command. If the MSB is not set, it is considered the Draw Thyself command. In fact, a single byte can cause a character to draw itself and set the XY position of the next character. The four Boolean operators included (OR, KO, MOV, and XOR) can, unlike with most typesetters, be applied to both text and graphics.

Summary

In general, the method for getting a document on the screen to paper is as follows (see figure 6): The document editor on the host computer produces the document file. Then a filter translates the document file into the PDL for the target printer. The PDL commands are then passed as a data stream to the PDL interpreter on board the RIP. The RIP translates the commands into the pulses of the laser in the laser printer. These pulses cause the toner to adhere to the paper to produce the printed words and graphics.

The result is a successful interaction of hardware and software to produce a high-quality document with minimum effort on the part of the user.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1. We wish to thank Robert A. Morris, of Interleaf and the University of Massachusetts at Boston, for his contribution to this section on PDLs, much of which is drawn from his article, "Page Description Languages," Proceedings of the ProText II Conference, Boole Press, Dublin, 1985.

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Programming in PostScript

Techniques and applications in vision research, plus a survey of PostScript hardware and software

Denis G. Pelli

MOST PEOPLE WHO use PostScript-driven printers have never seen a PostScript program because their application software generates and sends the necessary PostScript commands automatically whenever they say “Print.” For routine applications, this is as it should be. However, programming directly in PostScript opens up many new possibilities, particularly for creating images from mathematical descriptions.

For instance, I use PostScript to produce patterns to help my study of the visual system. In this article, I will use some of those patterns to illustrate PostScript’s power. I’ll also list some useful PostScript products and services.

PostScript programming is best for those occasions where you begin by knowing only a mathematical description of an image and want to find out what the image would look like. This approach is old hat to anyone who has done computer graphics on a video display. Unfortunately, it is difficult and expensive to obtain an accurate photograph of what’s on the screen, primarily because of the non-linearity and variability of photography. PostScript lets you get faithful renditions directly on paper.

Another attraction of PostScript is that you can debug and refine your picture-generating programs using a relatively low-cost (around $5000) laser printer such as the Apple LaserWriter, which will produce fair-quality drafts (300 dots per inch) immediately for a few cents per page. For the final output, you can send the same program by modem to a $60,000 printer like the Linotype L300, which will produce superb quality prints (2540 dpi) for $10 per page. The same program runs on both printers because PostScript is machine independent. (This article includes examples produced by both printers.)

Overview PostScript is a full-fledged structured language. Like FORTH, it is stack oriented and uses postfix notation. For example, to add 2 and 2 you say 22 add. Each PostScript printer has a built-in microprocessor and a PostScript interpreter that will run your program. The page is represented by a bit map, with 1 bit per pixel. (PostScript incorporates some limited support for color, but none of the available printers supports color.) When the page is printed (usually by the showpage command), the bit map is transferred to the page, making each pixel either black or white. However, to preserve machine independence, you are not allowed to read from or write to the bit map. Instead, your program includes “painting” operators that set and clear bits within defined areas of the bit map.

PostScript offers three kinds of painting operators, allowing three quite different approaches to describing your image: one-dimensional paths, two-dimensional sampled images, and text. Before explaining the three kinds of painting, I should say a few words about an operation that can be applied to all three: digital halftoning.

Each pixel in a PostScript image is either black or white. PostScript produces the illusion of intermediate gray levels by digital halftoning—breaking the image up into cells, each containing many pixels, and setting some of the pixels to white and the rest to black. If the cells are too small for the eye to resolve, the viewer will see a uniform gray, and the illusion will be successful.

You can adjust the size of the cell by the screen operator, which lets you specify how many cells per inch. When you request a particular gray level, PostScript will set approximately that fraction of the pixels in each cell to white and the rest to black.

Obviously, there’s a trade-off here. You’d like to have very small cells so that the eye can’t resolve them and the picture will look continuous. But if the cells are small, they will contain few pixels and you will have only a few possible gray levels.

Your gray levels will be coarsely quantized (approximated by the nearest available discrete level). In images where the gray level varies smoothly, such as in a person’s face, coarsely quantizing the gray level will produce noticeable contours at the transition between gray levels.

Note that digital halftoning is quite new and the terminology has not yet settled. In particular, the word “dot” refers continued

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to two quite different things. If the resolu-
tion of a printer is specified as "300
dpi," it means 300 pixels per inch. If a
halftone image is "18.75 dpi," it means
18.75 halftone cells per inch. If the
image is produced by digital halftoning,
you can assume that each cell has many
pixels. For example, nearly all the black-
and-white continuous-tone images in
BYTE have 120 cells per inch. Most of
those images were produced by tradition-
al halftoning, which does not involve
pixels at all.

The faces below (see figure 2) were
produced by digital halftoning with 120
cells per inch and 2540 pixels per inch,
so each square cell contains \( \frac{2540}{120} \) = 448 pixels. In principle, this would
allow for 449 different gray levels (from
0 to 448 pixels set to white in each cell),
but an undocumented limitation of Post-
Script is that the requested gray level is
quantized to 8 bits, allowing, at the most,
256 different gray levels.

**Paths**

One of the fundamental design goals of
PostScript is to be independent of the de-
tails—especially the dot resolution—of
the particular printer used. To achieve
and enforce this, PostScript does not let
you ask any questions about the state
(black or white) of the pixels that make
up the page’s image. Instead, you create
an image by defining an area or “path”
and then filling it.

A path is a series of lines and curves,
lke a line drawing. However, the path it-
self is not a drawing. To make an image,
you must use a painting operator. The
two painting operators that can be ap-
bled to paths are stroke and fill. Stroking
a path produces an image on the page
consisting of a line of specified thick-
ness. (You can also specify the gray
level, the kind of dashes for a dashed
line, the type of line termination, and the
shape of corners.) Filling a path causes
areas that are inside the path to be painted
with a specified gray level, without af-
flecting areas that are outside. The mean-
ings of “inside” and “outside” are obvi-
ous for a simple closed curve. For more
complex paths, PostScript offers a choice
of two different rules for determining
which areas are inside and out.

Figure 1 was produced by stroking
paths. The R and V are two of the ten
characters (CDHKNORSVZ) in the
Sloan font, named after its designer,
Louise Sloan. The Sloan font is recom-
mended for vision testing (reference 1).

Obviously, if you are designing vision
tests, it is helpful to be able to use the of-
icially sanctioned font. Listing 1 shows
the programs that I wrote to produce R
and V. I wrote similar programs for the
other eight characters in the Sloan alpha-
bet. With some extra statements, you
could make this a proper PostScript font,
usable in any place where you would like
to display text.

The first two statements in listing 1 are
comments. Everything from a % to the
end of the line is ignored. It is traditional
for the first line of a PostScript program
to begin with % to help your computer
identify it as a PostScript file. The third
line begins /preSloan, which pushes the
name preSloan onto the stack. Then
comes a procedure enclosed in braces
that extends over several lines. Post-
Script treats spaces and carriage returns
merely as separators. The procedure is
compiled and pushed onto the stack as
one item. After the closing brace of the
procedure is the word def. That causes
PostScript to pop the top two items from
the stack and use these to define the word
preSloan to refer to the given procedure.

The following lines similarly define the
procedures postSloan, R, and V. The
line 50700moveto first pushes 50 onto
the stack, then pushes 700 onto the stack.
Then the operator moveto pops the top
two items from the stack and moves the
current location to that x-y coordinate.
(The default coordinate system puts the
origin at the lower left corner of the page
and measures distance in “points,” 72 to
the inch, so the location [50,700] corre-
sponds to [0.69 inches, 9.72 inches],
which is 0.69 inches from the left margin
and 11 – 9.72 = 1.28 inches down from
the top of the 81/2- by 11-inch page.)

The 40 40 scale command amplifies
the scale so that one unit corresponds
to 40 points. R invokes the R procedure,
which draws an R one unit wide and one
unit high (where one unit is now 40
points). The R is made up of lines and
circles. It is all “clipped” by a unit square,
set up in preSloan, so that only what falls
inside the square appears in the final
image. It is the same for V. Finally,
showpage transfers the image to paper
ejects the page from the printer. You
can send this program to any PostScript
printer to obtain an image like figure 1.

Figure 2 was also produced by paths.

---

**Figure 1:** Two letters of the Sloan font
for vision testing produced by listing 1
on a Linotype L300 at 2540 dots per
inch.

**Figure 2:** Faces for testing infant acuity produced by listing 2 on a Linotype L300 at 2540 dots per inch.
The face in the figure is designed for acuity testing of infants. When you can see anything at all, you can see that it's a face. The black and white lines making up the face disappear when they are too thin for the eye to resolve. The biggest face will disappear when you are about 24 feet away, depending on your visual acuity. The smaller faces will disappear at proportionally shorter distances. The smallest face will disappear at about 18 inches. The trick to making it disappear is to draw it with a ribbon consisting of equal parts of white and black, so that when the white and black are blended together by the eye, the resulting average is identical to the gray background (references 2 and 3).

Listing 2 gives the PostScript program used to produce figure 2. After a few comments the face procedure is defined; it consists solely of moveto and lineto commands that trace a path. The draw procedure is defined next. Then the whole page is painted gray.

The program is optimized for the Linotype L300 running at 2540 dpi. For best results at 300 dpi, such as on a LaserWriter, you should remove the % from the beginnings of two lines labeled "at 300 per inch" and place the % symbol at the beginning of the two lines marked "at 2540 dots per inch." The % causes the rest of the line to be treated as a comment—in other words, ignored. After you remove the % from each line, those lines will give you the best choice of screen density for a LaserWriter.

Note that this does not contradict the claim that PostScript is device independent. When you go from higher resolution to lower resolution, you have to make some trade-offs in coarseness of screen and precision of gray level. You can often get acceptable results by letting the PostScript printer make the trade-off itself, but if you understand the underlying issues, you can usually get better results by specifying exactly what you want. The two gray levels were found by trial and error to produce 50 percent reflectance on the two printers at these screen densities.

The main program is next. It consists of a loop \( \text{repeat} \) which means that the procedure enclosed in braces should be repeated nine times. Inside the braces you will find the commands face, which lays down the path of the face, and draw, which paints the path, and the operators translate and scale, which shift and shrink the coordinate system to get ready for the next face.

To produce a black-and-white ribbon, the draw procedure must stroke the same path twice. This requires a trick, since _continued_
The second way to produce an image in PostScript is to use the image operator and provide it with the gray level of the desired image at each point on a regular grid. The most obvious application of this would be to reproduce a photograph that has been sampled previously. Figure 3a is an example. Each sample from the photograph is imaged by a cell containing many pixels. The fraction of the pixels in the cell that are white determines the gray level. Figure 3a was produced by a Linotype L300 at 2540 pixels per inch (reference 4).
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per inch. Figure 3b was produced by sending exactly the same program to an Apple LaserWriter Plus, which prints at 300 pixels per inch.

However, there is a more interesting application of the PostScript image command. You can use mathematics to synthesize an image that never existed before. Figure 4a is an example. By just looking at this pattern, you can perform a systems analysis of your visual system.

Any patch of the pattern is a sinusoidal grating, varying from white to black and back again. However, from left to right across the image, the fineness of the grating increases until it disappears. Similarly, from bottom to top the contrast of the grating decreases until it disappears. The lower the contrast of the grating, the higher the contrast sensitivity required to see it. If you follow any one bar in the image from the bottom up until it disappears, the height at which it disappears is the contrast sensitivity of your visual system for a grating of that fineness.

The fineness of a grating is usually specified as a spatial frequency—in cycles per inch, for example, where a cycle is a pair of light and dark stripes. However, the sensitivity of your eye depends not on the number of cycles per inch but on the number of cycles per degree of visual angle subtended at the eye (try looking at the pattern from various distances), so for vision work it is preferable to specify spatial frequency in cycles per degree.

The outline of visibility of all the bars describes the sensitivity of your visual system over a wide range of spatial frequencies. Notice that the vertical bars when taken together form a hump, peaking in the middle and falling off toward the left and right. The falloff to the right is determined largely by the optical quality of your eye. The falloff to the left is determined by neural limitations of your eye. This outline of visibility explains many characteristics of vision, including many visual illusions.

Figure 4a was produced by the program in listing 3. After a few commands to set up the coordinate systems of the sampled image and the page, the equation for the image is supplied to the image operator. The equation is essentially

\[ g = 0.5 \left( 1 + 10^{-y \sin (10^x)} \right), \]

where \( g \) is the desired gray level (i.e., 

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The kind of image, a sinusoidal grating swept in frequency and contrast, was first produced by Ferguson Campbell and John Robson at Cambridge University in the early sixties (reference 5). John Robson explained to me how they did it. They used two sawtooth oscillators to sweep the beam of an x-y oscilloscope in a vertical raster pattern, so that one vertical line took about 20 milliseconds and a whole frame took about a minute. The sinusoidal grating was produced by a sinusoidal oscillator connected (via a relay and capacitor) to the oscillator’s intensity-control input.

Campbell and Robson produced the vertical fading in contrast by using a high-speed relay to quickly charge a capacitor to the oscillator voltage at the bottom of each vertical cycle and letting the capacitor discharge through a resistor as the beam swept upward. The horizontal variation in frequency (fineness of the grating) was produced by a sinusoidal oscillator connected (via a capacitor to the oscillator voltage at the bottom of each vertical cycle) to the oscilloscope’s intensity-control input.

Figure 4a was produced by running listing 3 on a Linotype L300 at 2540 dots per inch and 127 cells per inch. Figure 4b was produced by running the same program on an Apple LaserWriter Plus at 300 dpi and 18.75 cells per inch. Note that figures 4a and 4b represent different images because the program explicitly changed the image to best take advantage of each printer’s resolution and avoid moire effects.

This kind of image, where the number of cycles is so fine that fewer than two samples occur in each cycle (a pair of light and dark stripes), there will be a moiré effect, resulting in very broad stripes where there should be fine stripes.

The PostScript printers are not smart enough to take into account the content of your image in their efforts to print the image faithfully at whatever the printer's resolution happens to be. Thus, programmers must watch out for moiré effects. Figure 4a was produced by running listing 3 on a Linotype L300 at 2540 dpi and 127 cells per inch.

Figure 4a: Sinusoidal grating swept in frequency and contrast. Produced by running listing 3 on a Linotype L300 at 2540 dots per inch and 127 cells per inch.

Figure 4b: Sinusoidal grating swept in frequency and contrast. Produced by running listing 3 on a Linotype L300 at 2540 dots per inch and 127 cells per inch.

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ASCII string, which is just a list of the desired characters. There are even facilities for kerning, or adjusting, the spacing between particular letter pairs, such as "TA," which looks best if the "A" is tucked slightly under the hat of the "T."

Second, it takes a lot of computation to run the programs corresponding to each character in a page of text. To alleviate this burden, whenever PostScript computes a character to paint it onto the page, it also saves a copy of the character’s bit map in a special area of memory called the "font cache." If the character is needed again, PostScript retrieves it from the cache instead of computing it again. Naturally, the cached copy can be used only for the same character from the same font at the same size and rotation.

Figure 5 (produced by listing 4) is a simple example of the use of text. This is a test chart to measure visual acuity, much like one you might see in an optometrist’s office. The letters are all at high contrast and get smaller and smaller until they disappear. The smallest letter that you can read is a measure of the resolution limit of your eye.

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**Figure 6 (produced by listing 5) is a new kind of test chart.** The letters are all the same size, but they vary in contrast, fading out until they disappear. The lowest contrast that you can read is a measure of the contrast sensitivity of your eye. The combination of acuity and contrast sensitivity results in a more complete assessment of the visual function of your eye than would acuity alone.

Incidentally, you may note a similarity between figure 4a and figures 5 and 6. In fact, the finest letter that you can read provides a useful estimate of the finest grating that you can resolve (the right edge of the hump in figure 4a), and the lowest contrast letter that you can read provides a useful estimate of your contrast sensitivity for gratings—the height of the hump in figure 4a (reference 6).

Figures 5 and 6 were produced by moving to a new location on the page for each character, setting the gray level, setting the font size, and printing the character by the show command. The programs are given in listings 4 and 5.

Note that figures 5 and 6 were produced with the Sloan font, which you won’t have. The programs in listings 4 and 5 explicitly check to see if Sloan is available; if not, they substitute Helvetica.

**Tools for Programming in PostScript**

First you’ll need the *PostScript Language Reference Manual* and the *PostScript Language Tutorial and Cookbook*, both written by Adobe Systems, the company that invented PostScript and put it in the public domain. These clear, well-organized books are models for how manuals should be written, with a clear separation of the tutorial and reference functions. The tutorial has lots of real examples, and the reference manual is organized alphabetically.

You’ll also need a computer with a plain text editor (to write your program) and connection to a PostScript printer. Your computer won’t be doing much, just sending your program to the printer and receiving any messages from the printer. It’s the printer that interprets and runs your program.

The simplest way to connect any computer to a PostScript printer is by a serial line, using any simple communication program. However, most users do not...
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<tr>
<th>Target Microprocessor Families Supported</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1802/1805 68000/68010 COP400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6502/65C02 68020 HD64180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6801/6301 8048/8041 NEC 7500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6804 8051 TMS-32010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6805/6305 8085 TMS-32020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6809 8096 Z8</td>
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<td>68HC11 F8/3870 Z8</td>
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<th>Host Operating Systems</th>
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own a PostScript printer. Typically, they share one over a network. This arrangement requires that you use a downloader program to send your PostScript program (a text file) via the network to the printer. A good downloader should also be able to receive, display, and save any messages sent back from the PostScript printer.

Receiving messages from the printer is very important; otherwise, you’ll only know when your program crashes by the fact that no paper comes out of the printer. I debugged my first few PostScript programs that way, running to the other room, waiting to see if I got any output—usually I didn’t—and walking back to edit my program a bit and trying again. It’s reminiscent of using the toggles on a PDP-11/20 to program in machine code—obviously something best left to “real programmers,” as no sane person would enjoy such a tedious procedure.

If you can’t receive messages from the printer, a less convenient solution is to use Adobe’s free “error break page handler,” a PostScript program you send to the printer once. From then on (until you reset the printer), when any program crashes you’ll get a printed page showing the error message, the offending command, and a peek at what’s on the stack. However, this still requires running back and forth between your computer and the printer.

Several good downloader programs are now available for the Macintosh. The best one is free. SendPS from Adobe Systems will send your program over AppleTalk to the Apple LaserWriter. It will also receive any messages sent back over AppleTalk from the printer, show them to you as they arrive, and automatically store them in a file for your later perusal. You can also ask for a report on the status of the printer at any time, and you can initiate a remote reset of the printer. SendPS doesn’t include a text editor, so you’ll need one. (I recommend the shareware desk accessory MockWrite.) PostHaste and JustText have all the features of SendPS (except showing messages as they arrive), plus built-in multiwindow editing, and JustText comes with extra programs that convert MacPaint, Thunderscan, and MacVision files into PostScript.

Cricket Draw, from Cricket Software, lets you edit and download a PostScript program but does not receive messages from the printer. Its main attraction for the PostScript programmer is that it lets you make a MacDraw-like drawing (or read in a MacDraw file) and convert it into pure PostScript. It has a handy PostScript help function that lets you look up a brief explanation of any PostScript operator—moveTo, for example.

One feature I’d like to see in future PostScript downloaders is an %%Include: filename statement that would indicate to the downloader that another file (e.g., containing your favorite subroutines) should be included when the program is downloaded. This is a standard feature of most modern languages, but PostScript lacks it and thus deprives the programmer of many of the main advantages of modular programming. You have to put everything in one file, making nontrivial PostScript source files unreasonably long and making it difficult to keep all your copies of a given subroutine up to date.

At present, much less software is available for PostScript downloading for non-Macintosh computers. Synergetics sells some utilities for programming in PostScript on an Apple IIGS, IIc, or IIe. Several companies offer hardware and software (see table 1) to connect an IBM PC-compatible to an AppleTalk network; some of these products let you receive messages from the printer. Now that IBM has endorsed PostScript for use in its future desktop publishing products, things are bound to improve for IBM PC users.

Many computer companies, such as Digital Equipment Corporation and Sun Microsystems, are bringing out new PostScript printers and providing them with interfaces to connect to computers from those manufacturers. (A list of PostScript printers appears in the text box on page 188.) Most of the existing and forthcoming printers have 300-dpi resolution, like the Apple LaserWriter.

Linotype makes two high-resolution

![Conventional acuity chart produced by listing 4 on a Linotype L300 at 2540 dots per inch.](image1)

![Pelli-Robson Letter Sensitivity Chart produced by listing 5 on a Linotype L300 at 2540 dots per inch. Copyright 1987 by Denis G. Pelli.](image2)
Microsoft® Windows is becoming the most popular operating environment for PC systems. It’s not surprising. Windows provides the foundation for an exciting new generation of applications that users are demanding. In addition, Windows handles many of the details involved in a software project allowing you to spend more time enhancing your application. That’s why a growing number of corporate and independent software developers are building Windows applications.

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Microsoft Windows Software Development Kit includes:
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- Font editor.
- Resource compiler.
- Linker.
- MAKE (program maintenance utility).
- Symbolic debugger.
- Heap analysis utility.
- Sample programs.
- Windows libraries.
- Programmer’s reference.
- Programmer’s utility guide.

System requirements:
- 512K memory, DOS 2.0 or higher.
- Two double sided disk drives*
- Graphics adapter card.
- Hard disk recommended

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PostScript-compatible printers, the L100 ($35,000) with a maximum resolution of 1270 dpi, and the L300 ($60,000) with a maximum resolution of 2540 dpi. Linotype calls them its Series 100 printers. Oddly enough, the resolution of these computerized printers must be set manually, to 615, 1270, or (on the L300) 2540 dpi. Lino-
type plans to upgrade the ROMs in all the Linotype L100 and L300 printers to Post-
script version 42.5 soon. Apparently, this upgrade speeds up printing a lot, ranging from a factor of 1.5 times faster for printing noncached fonts to a factor of nearly 20 for bit-mapped images.

An odd deficiency of PostScript, given that it is a device-independent page-
description language, is that it lacks any general device-independent way to de-
scribe the size of the page. To obtain nonstandard page sizes on the Linotype
printers (up to 11.7 inches by 25.7 inches at 1270 dpi, less at 2540 dpi), you need to
use a special operator, setpaperaa, which is documented in a supplementary
manual for the Linotype printers (see the text box on page 188).

Some Linotype print shops will charge extra or refuse to run jobs that take many
hours. For example, figure 4a took seven hours on an L300, and I was told,
"Never again!" However, the Adobe books give no information about timing.
Some of my jobs take only slightly longer to run on the Linotype than on the Laser-
Writer; others take much longer.

I find that I can get an upper bound on Linotype run time by measuring how
long the job takes on the LaserWriter and multiplying by the factor by which the
number of pixels will be increased. For instance, if the job takes 1 minute at 300
dpi on the LaserWriter, it might take up to (2540/300)² = 72 times as long (i.e.,
72 minutes) at 2540 dpi on the L300. This is because the LaserWriter (and the
LaserWriter Plus) and the Linotype L100 and L300 all use the Motorola 68000
microprocessor.

However, I've just learned that Linotype plans to upgrade the ROMs in all the
Linotype L100 and L300 printers to Post-

table lists the print shops I know of
that will run PostScript jobs on Linotype
L300 printers. All will accept job
missions by modem or on a Macintosh
disk. They typically charge $10 per page
(plus postage) and try for, but do not
promise, one-day turnaround. I always
ask to have my printout sent by express
mail. (I've only used MacTypeNet, and
I'm happy with its service, though it
doesn't always achieve one-day turn-
around.)

Debugging
The error messages from PostScript are
quite specific and helpful, particularly
continued
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Listing 5: The PostScript program to produce the Pelli-Robson Letter Sensitivity test chart in figure 6.

```postscript
%! % Produce Figure 6
50 750 moveto /width 258 def /size width 5 div def
width 2 div size -1.5 mul rmoveto
FontDirectory /Sloan known
{/Sloan findfont size scalefont setfont
{/Helvetica findfont size 1.8 mul scalefont setfont} ifelse
/dpi 72 0 matrix def
defaultmatrix
sqrt
def
/screen dpi 16 div def
screen 127 gt [screen 127 def] if
screen currentscreen 3 -1 rol
pop setscreen /c 1 def
/setcontrast {1 sub neg setgray} def
/showrow {gsave
dup stringwidth pop -2 div 0 rmoveto
c setcontrast show
grestore
/c c 2 div def
0 size -2 mul rmoveto }
def
(N C R) showrow (C H V) showrow
(Z R H) showrow (S H N) showrow
(V D K) showrow (N K Z) showrow
(S Z O) showrow (R D N) showrow
(R Z S) showrow (Z R N) showrow
showpage
```

Table 1: Print shops that output PostScript jobs on Linotype L300 printers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ampersand Typographers</td>
<td>Toronto, Canada</td>
<td>(416) 422-1444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobb Typesetting</td>
<td>Cincinnati, OH</td>
<td>(513) 241-1146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design North Inc.</td>
<td>Racine, WI</td>
<td>(414) 762-1320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desktop Publishing Inc.</td>
<td>San Rafael, CA</td>
<td>(415) 258-0767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacTypeNet</td>
<td>Livonia, MI</td>
<td>(313) 477-2733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Colorite Corp.</td>
<td>New Berlin, WI</td>
<td>(414) 784-8980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProTypography</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>(312) 266-8973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typesetting Services Corp.</td>
<td>Providence, RI</td>
<td>(401) 421-2264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

because all the PostScript operators do extensive type and range checking of their arguments and give out a specific error message if they don’t like them.

PostScript has several “print” commands that are helpful in debugging. They do not put ink on paper—instead, they send a message back to the host. (To put ink on paper, you say showpage.) One especially useful print command is \( = = \), which will print whatever is on the top of the stack. What’s great about that is that anything can be put on the stack, even a compiled procedure, and \( = = \) will uncompile it and print it out for you. It took me a while to realize just how useful printing is, since the Adobe books don’t say much about debugging.

Incidentally, there are bugs in the PostScript interpreters (version 38.0) resident in the PostScript printers. For example, I discovered that stroking very large arcs can get a PostScript printer so confused that all subsequent jobs fail with a limit-check frame device error until you reset the printer. Adobe has acknowledged the bug and promises to fix it in a future release of the PostScript interpreter. The PostScript operator version returns a string with the version number of the interpreter.

Wrapping Up
You might find four periodicals interesting. Don Lancaster’s “Ask the Guru” column in Computer Shopper has clever ideas for nonobvious uses of PostScript and the LaserWriter. Colophon and Graphic Perspective, glossy newsletters illustrated with fancy PostScript illustrations, often include program listings. Finally, the PostScript Language Journal will publish its first issue about the time you are reading this.

PostScript isn’t really meant for programming, but it is very handy as a programming language to create images from mathematical descriptions. It offers various ways of describing your image, a high degree of machine independence, the possibility of debugging on moderately priced, widely available printers, and final printing at 2540 dpi for $10 a page. PostScript makes it easy to produce images on paper that would be difficult or impossible to produce otherwise.

REFERENCES
Fujitsu 360K
Toshiba
Portable 256K
IBM
PCAM
Hardware
Computers
IBM
XT 256K 1 DR  $1072
AT 256K 1 DR  $2475
Multitech
1100-1111  $3393
Intel 80386, 16MHz:
40 MB up to 2MB Ram
Acem 900  $1149
IBM 15” Class Color Monitor
The Azon 900 comes with either 80386 or 80286 chip operating at 16 MHz, eight expansion post, Hard Disk Drive/Flp-ply/Floppy Drive:
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-1 1/2" floppy and MS DOS 3.2.
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Hewlett Packard
Laser Jet Series II  $1990
12 Pages per min. Six times the product life of Competitor.
Kyocera
F1010  $391
Tail Tree
J Laser+ PC * $392
J Laser+ AT  $479
Printer Buffer
Quadram
Microfizer VI $749
256k exp to 1MB
Memory Expansion
Multifunction
P/S/G/OK  $89
AST
Sixpack
Premium  $308
Sixpack + (384K) $227
Rampage PC  $234
Rampage AT  $445
Everex
2 MB EMS  $129
Scanner
Princeton
LS-200  $1046
Gelatin Laser Scanner with OCR Software.
LS-300 allows you to go from paper to PC with text, graphics and photos.
Modem
US Robotics
Direct 2400 Int. $179
Courier HST
9600 Baud  $499
Direct 2400 Int. $179
Ex 1000  $499
External  $369
USB connects to the modem and allows for the transmission of data.
Modem
Pocket Modem $106
Pocket Modem with Answer/kW Dial and Hayes compatible.

Input Devices
Logic Mouse C7 $85
Mouse Systems
PCMouse  $126
Bus = PC Port
CH Products
Mach III Joystick $35
Mach IV Joystick $40
Power Supply
150 Watt  $79
Data Shield
300 WT (XT)  $349
500 WT (AT)  $549
Software
Business Software
Lotus 123  V.2.2  $305
WordStar Professional  $251
Dbase III +  $399
Dac Easy  $45
WordPerfect 4.0 $217

Networking
Comm. Tech. 559
Tru-Link  $399
Modem
Link WACR  $299

Utilities
Mace Utilities  $59

Investment
Dow Jones, Market Analyzer Plus  $267
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Lattice C Compiler

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Microsoft FORTRAN

New version produces smallest, fastest PC code. Uses the same optimizer and code generator from the Microsoft C compiler. Full ANSI FORTRAN 77 compatibility. GSA-certified to be error-free at the highest level. Includes advanced intrinsic math functions, Microsoft’s CodeView debugger, a MAKE utility, linker, library manager and many other enhancements.

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A new concept C library containing overlayed logical windows, transaction data entry and three kinds of menu systems. Features virtual windows, many data types, device independence, total screen management and more. Simple to use, yet highly sophisticated. Supports all major compilers, all models, auto installation. Over 125 functions, no royalties, sources available.

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Advanced screen manager with a screen designer, code generator and function libraries. Works with popular graphics libraries to allow data entry in graphics modes. Includes full, portable library source code.

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HALO, since 1981, the industry standard library of graphic subroutines. HALO has the largest installed base of end-users and more ISV’s than any PC graphics software environment. Why? Because HALO grows with the industry. Constantly improved, HALO now supports 16 programming languages and over 125 devices. Media Cybernetics offers HALO programmers professional support, practical licensing and the continuing commitment to assure that HALO will always be one of the most effective graphic toolkits available. media cybernetics, inc.

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Special BIX supplement: The following bonus reviews appear in the may87 suppl BIX conference: "Removable-Cartridge Drives" by Alexis Lane, an evaluation of removable-media drives for the IBM PC and compatibles; "OPS5+" by Leonard Moskowitz, a review of this production-system language for the IBM PC, XT, AT, and compatibles; and "The Cauzin Softstrip System" by Gregg Williams, an evaluation of a device that hooks up to an Apple II, IBM PC, or Macintosh and reads high-density paper data strips. (For information on joining BIX, see page 256.)
What can you expect from the new LaserJet Series II Printer?

Everything.
Because the LaserJet Series II Printer from Hewlett-Packard is the product of experience. It’s a second generation printer from the company with the world’s largest installed base of laser printers.

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Or you can create a sophisticated combination of text and graphics. With additional plug-in memory, you can also produce full-page 300 dpi graphics, like our Nuts form shown below. To do this, we used HP’s new ScanJet desktop scanner, Microsoft Windows and Pagemaker® from Aldus.

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Last month's review of more than 50 dot-matrix printers included results of benchmark tests for all but a few models, which we were unable to test in time for the review. BYTE technical editor George Stewart has completed the tests on two of these printers: NEC Information Systems' Pinwriter P5XL, a 24-wire printer that sells for $1674, and Newbury Data's OSP-3, an 18-wire model that costs $1560. Throughput for the Pinwriter P5XL came in at 137 characters per second in draft mode, 58 cps in near-letter-quality mode, and 598 cps in graphics mode. Corresponding measurements for the OSP-3 are 136, 86, and 338 cps.

Sound levels in draft, NLQ, and graphics modes were measured at 69, 73, and 75 decibels for the Pinwriter P5XL, and 71, 72, and 84 dB for the OSP-3. Finally, on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the best and I being the worst), BYTE editors rated print quality for the Pinwriter P5XL at 3, 4, and 3 in draft, NLQ, and graphics modes; the OSP-3 was rated at 3, 4, and 4, respectively.

We've also discovered that table 1 (page 205) in the April printer review contains a consistent error in the sound levels recorded for the printers' graphics modes. The dB levels we published are far too high; the correct figures appear on page 254 in this issue. Generally, sound levels for the graphics mode ranged from 5 percent to 10 percent higher than those for NLQ mode. At the low end of the sound range, for example, dB levels for the Tandy DMP 130 rose from 62 in NLQ to 65 in graphics mode. Near the high end of the range, Output Technology's OT-700e had a 10-point jump from 79 to 89 dB. In the more common mid-range level, the Alps America ALQ324 shifted only slightly from 71 to 72 dB.

Our lineup this month starts off with Stephen Satchell's review of 10 high-speed internal modems, a follow-up to his evaluation of 23 external modems in the December 1986 issue. Once more, Stephen simulated a bad telephone line to test the modems. For this review, he also ran a set of "street tests" to see how the units are likely to hold up during transmission on an average telephone line.

Another highlight this month is John Unger's review of the Compaq Portable III, a 12-MHz transportable with a 20- or 40-megabyte hard disk. The Portable III has more power and speed than many desktops; its performance is unmatched by any other portable computer—at least those available at press time. Completing this month's section are reviews of the Commodore 64C, a $229.95 8-bit computer bundled with the GEOS window-and-icon operating system; SCSI hard disk drives and BASIC compilers for the Macintosh; Q&A version 2.0, a file manager teamed with a word processor and natural-language front end; and Lyrix, a word processor that runs under UNIX and Xenix.

As a bonus, three additional reviews are available on BIX in the may87.supp conference, the supplement to this issue of BYTE. (For information on joining BIX, see page 256.) Here are brief summaries for readers who don't subscribe to BIX.

First, Alexis Lane evaluates removable-cartridge drives for the IBM PC and compatibles: Iomega's Bernoulli Box Plus, Syugen's DuraPak, and IDEAsociates' Diskit 2 and Diskit 2 Plus. All four units use 10-, 15-, or 20-megabyte removable cartridges to provide virtually unlimited disk storage, file security, and transportability of data.

Of the units tested, Alexis's favorite was the Bernoulli Box Plus, though it was also the most expensive at $3775 (a price that includes a booting controller board). This model holds one 80-megabyte hard disk drive and two 20-megabyte removable-cartridge drives. The unit is reliable, its documentation is complete, and it comes with a useful selection of utilities. For more information, contact Iomega Corp., 1821 West 4000 South, Roy, UT 84067, (801) 778-3000.

The DuraPak, the least expensive unit at $2295, also performed well. It holds two 15-megabyte removable-cartridge drives and comes with a controller card. Contact Syugen Inc. at 556 Gibraltar Dr., Milpitas, CA 95035, (408) 263-4411 for details. The Diskit 2 ($2995) and Diskit 2 Plus ($3595) each have two 10-megabyte removable-cartridge drives; on the 2 Plus, you also get DES-based file-encryption capabilities for added security. For more information, contact IDEAsociates Inc., 29 Dunham Rd., Billerica, MA 01821, (617) 663-6878. The two Diskit units, Alexis found, have the best installation program; but one of the cartridges developed many bad sectors, causing data loss.

The benchmarks show OPSS+ to be an excellent performer on a PC AT, sometimes faster than VAX OPSS, and about half as fast as OPSS on the Symbolics 3670. The $1800 package offers hooks to external Lattice C procedures, first-rate documentation, and useful language extensions. A few minor problems showed up during the review, and the DOS 640K-byte memory restriction limits the size of the production systems you can build. But in all, Leonard says, it's a professional package that will give you excellent code compatibility.

Finally, BYTE's senior technical editor Gregg Williams reviews the Cauzin Soft-Strip System. This device hooks up to a serial port on an Apple II, IBM PC, or Macintosh and reads high-density data strips printed on paper. Each eight-inch strip encodes about 1000 to 5000 bytes, with up to seven strips per page. The reader ($199.95) comes with an accessory kit ($19.95) containing cables, software, instructions, and sample programs.

Gregg found the system easy to use and reliable on all three computers. He also experimented with The Stripper, a $29.95 program from Cauzin for creating low-resolution data strips with a dot-matrix printer. Cauzin Systems Inc. (835 South Main St., Waterbury, CT 06706, (203) 573-0150) also sells a program for making high-density data strips with laser printers. Gregg concludes that this well-designed piece of technology will be of use if you need to distribute small amounts of software or data.

—Cathryn Baskin
Senior Technical Editor, Reviews
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The HX-12E switches automatically from CGA to EGA for complete IBM compatibility at the best value. And Princeton delivers performance to meet your immediate needs today. And every day. Right away.

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So the next time you're wondering who's got the best monitor, take a look at the Princeton HX-12E. It's where you'll find the finest components matched to the highest engineering standards for uncompromising performance and value. And we simply can't picture it any other way. And that's no fooling.

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GROUP REVIEW

High-Speed Internal Modems

Stephen Satchell

For my review entitled "23 Modems" (December 1986 BYTE), I simulated a bad telephone line and tortured 23 stand-alone modems to see what they could tolerate. For this review, I tested 10 modems that you install inside the IBM PC family of computers (see table 1 for a complete list of the modems and company names). Seven of these modems support 300/1200/2400-bit-per-second operation, and three can transmit at 9600 bps.

A word of caution: I tested these modems only for their ability to originate calls. The resulting data is valuable to people who use their modems for calling information services, bulletin boards, and message systems. I made no tests of the modems' ability to answer calls. This means that service providers and bulletin board operators should not depend solely on these results to select a modem for such services.

Features

Table 2 lists some of the features I looked for when examining these modems. This is by no means a complete comparison chart, but it details some of the basics. The first section shows some elementary capabilities and convenience items, such as the size of the card, whether a speaker is located on the card (this lets you monitor call progress audibly when making attended calls), and whether a phone jack is included on the card for an external telephone (this lets you plug a phone in without a Y adapter).

Luxury features include such things as a real-time clock, support for COM ports 3 and 4, CCITT V.22 quadrature phase-modulation capability at 1200 bps, security support (such as modem passwords and auto-callback), and the number of user-defined communications parameter setups that you can store in each modem.

The second section of table 2 details the user diagnostics available with each modem. There is nothing like being able to isolate a problem yourself to save needless trips to the repair shop. I consider local analog loopback capability a necessity because it checks the carrier transmit and carrier receive; I would not purchase a modem without it. The other three diagnostic modes (local digital loopback, initiate remote loopback, and response to remote loopback) are nice to have but not absolutely necessary.

Special dialing features such as stored directory entries and automatic redial are duplicated in most IBM PC terminal-emulator programs.

All modems sense the presence of a dial tone, and most allow you to wait for a secondary dial tone (when connecting to a toll trunk, for instance). All can switch from Touch-tone to pulse dialing and back. All allow you to repeat the last command given, providing some limited redial capability. Some modems have a remote-ring indication, telling you that the other end is ringing, while the USRobotics Microlink 2400 and the Cermetek 2400 SPC will tell you if a voice answers.

Call-progress monitoring is best done by listening on a speaker. Programs that run unattended or hide the mechanics of making a connection require some information to aid in error recovery. All the modems I reviewed return the standard Hayes call-progress-monitoring result codes with the exception of the Cermetek 2400 SPC.

The last section of table 2 details the compatibility of each modem's command set with the basic Hayes command set. For this purpose, I checked to make sure that the commands shown in table 3 were functional. S-registers 0 through 12 and result codes 0 through 10 should be as defined for the Hayes 1200- and 2400-bps modems. Other commands, registers, and results can be anything the modem company wishes to make them. Deviations are listed for each modem.

Several modems require you to set an S-register to indicate the speed you wish to use. If you use the default, the auto-baud feature will cause the modem to attempt to connect at the fastest rate that the remote modem responds to. This means that if you use an on-line information service and wish to use a speed of 300 bps because it is cheaper, you must set an S-register to make this happen. Otherwise, the modem will connect at a faster, more expensive speed.

Modem Basics

In my "23 Modems" article, I went into considerable detail as to how a modem works. For this article, I'll summarize briefly.

A modem (which stands for modulator-demodulator) takes digital data and converts it into a signal for transmission at the originating end of the transmission line, and another modem receives and regenerates the digital data at the other end. Depending on the modulation method, 8 or more data bits are grouped to represent a character, and the characters are transmitted over the telephone line using one of the standard communications modulation schemes.

In full-duplex connections over the switched network (local and long-distance direct-dial telephone service) a maximum of 600 symbols, each consisting of one or more modulation changes, are sent in each direction. In half-duplex connections, up to 2400 symbols are sent in one direction at a time, with the direction changing at prearranged intervals; this is known as line turnaround. A sym-

continued

Stephen Satchell (Satchell Evaluations, 16 Searing Ave., Morristown, NJ 07960) has been active in computer product development and evaluation since 1971.

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bol encodes 1 or more data bits using a variety of modulation changes. The data rate is defined as the reciprocal of the length (in seconds) of the shortest element in the transmitted signal. The data rate can therefore be different from the bps rate; again, this is dependent on the type of modulation used. Generally, though, for the commonly used frequency-shift modulation, they are considered to be the same.

What Goes Wrong
Most modems have no difficulty recognizing the symbols transmitted on an ideal telephone connection, such as the one you get when you connect two modems together with a standard modular telephone cord. Very little degradation of the modulated signal occurs.

As you start putting more wire between the modems, transmission imperfections start appearing. These imperfections, called impairments by the telephone industry, can interfere with the modem's ability to recognize each symbol correctly. At some point in the telephone network, the telephone company will split your connection into two, handling each direction separately. This eases some of the difficulties of long-distance telephoning, but it also means that each half of the connection can have its own problems. You can have a clean connection going in one direction and a noisy one going in the other direction.

To complicate the matter of testing a modem on a switched network, you cannot depend on having the call routed the same way twice. But even if the calls could be routed, line conditions change due to the weather, the age of the telephone lines, replacement of lines and switch equipment, and even introduction of new technology into the circuits, such as fiber optics.

Test Setup
To subject these modems to exactly the same conditions with each other and with the modems that I evaluated in my other review, I built a telephone connection simulator (see figure 1) by using a Bradley Telecom Corporation 2A/2B line simulator, a reference modem (an AT&T 2224B), a Hewlett-Packard 4437A attenuator, passive hybrid splitters, and a Ramsa 8210 recording mixer (used to synthesize the line amplifiers). The computer used was an IBM PC AT model 099. The modem being tested was installed in slot 4 of the PC AT.

In my prior evaluation, I placed the AT&T 2224B in digital loopback mode. Thus, the data was sent from the modem under test to the reference modem over a clean line, looped back into the reference modem, and then returned to the modem under test through the impairment generator. For this review, I elected to send the data directly from the reference modem (see figure 1). This better approximates actual operation. I spot-checked several modems with the 2224B in loopback mode and obtained exactly the same results.

This change supports realistic testing of the high-speed modems: the Fastcomm 2496B, the Teletbit TrailBlazer, and the DCA IRMA Fastlink. Since the throughput of the modem under test could be

Table 1: Label definitions and prices for the modems tested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modem</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AJ 2400-2H01</td>
<td>Anderson Jacobson</td>
<td>$450 (no software)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightning 111</td>
<td>Anchor Automation Inc.</td>
<td>$499 without MicroNet protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2400 SPC</td>
<td>Cermatek Microelectronics Inc.</td>
<td>$395 without software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-Pak #24</td>
<td>CTS Fabri-Tek Inc.</td>
<td>$395 without software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRMA Fastlink</td>
<td>Digital Communications Associates Inc.</td>
<td>$1195 (includes Crosstalk-Fast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastcomm 2496B</td>
<td>Fastcomm Data Corp.</td>
<td>$1195 without software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smartmodem 2400B</td>
<td>Hayes Microcomputer Products Inc.</td>
<td>$1195 without software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastmodem</td>
<td>Creative Digital Inc.</td>
<td>$599 (includes Telpac software)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury Fastmodem</td>
<td>Creative Digital Inc.</td>
<td>$599 (includes Telpac software)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encore 2400 HB</td>
<td>OmnTel Inc.</td>
<td>$449 (includes Bitcom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TrailBlazer</td>
<td>Teletbit Corp.</td>
<td>$1390 with Crosstalk XVI-Fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Card 24</td>
<td>Ven-Tel Inc.</td>
<td>$599 (includes Crosstalk XVI)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These modems were not tested due to failure during initial pretest operations.*
Table 2: Features of the modems listed in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>AJ</th>
<th>ANC</th>
<th>CER</th>
<th>CTS</th>
<th>DCA</th>
<th>EV</th>
<th>HAY</th>
<th>MER</th>
<th>OMN</th>
<th>TEL</th>
<th>USR</th>
<th>VEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Half Card</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 and 4 support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCITT V.22 (1200 bps)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone jack</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>User-stored setups</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Real-time clock</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Security support</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed set by auto-baud</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>In-modem help</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diagnostics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local analog loopback</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local digital loopback</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate remote loopback</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response-to-remote loopback</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directory entries</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic redial</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call-progress status (exceptions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy signal</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote ringing</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice answer</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayes command set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing/different basic commands</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>M,W</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>!,W</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing/different S-registers</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing/different results</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6—9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The call-progress result codes and Hayes commands from table 3 that are not shown are present in all the modems tested.

Table 3: Hayes-compatible commands.

| A - Answer | P - Pulse dial | W - Wait for dial tone |
| D - Dial | Q - Response disable | X - Select response set (X0,X1) |
| E - Command echo | R - Reverse orig/ans | Z - Reset |
| H - Hook control | S - Read/set S-registers | - - - Pause |
| M - Speaker control | T - Tone dial | - - - Stay in command mode |
| O - Go on-line | V - Verbose/terse responses | - - - after dialing |
|              |                | - - - Hookflash |

Table 4: Definitions of impairment labels.

| Sens: | Sensitivity in dBm to initiate error-free connection. |
| P-mod: | Phase modulation in degrees. |
| A-mod: | Amplitude modulation in percent. |
| White: | White noise signal-to-noise ratio in dB. |
| G-hit: | Gain hit in dB. |
| P-hit: | Phase hit in degrees. |
| Err: | Number of errors in the two-minute worst-case test. |
| CPS: | Throughput in characters per second in the worst-case test, truncated to the nearest character by the test program. |
that the edge connector was misaligned with the PC AT system board connector. This was due to improper manufacturing tolerances when the board outline was trimmed, as well as improper location of the support bracket. Luckily, this caused no damage to the PC AT. The second AJ 2400-2H01 that I tested was able to get a clean connection at 300 bps, but 1200- and 2400-bps connections were not error-free. Repeated calls to Anderson Jacobson about this problem produced no response.

The first sample of the Anchor Automation Lightning i/i that I received would not connect cleanly at any speed. The second sample was better at 300 bps, but it was not error-free at 1200 bps and, at 2400 bps, I couldn’t get the modem to finish the connection sequence. Anchor Automation said it was surprised at this result but offered no explanation.

Test Conditions
A test series consisted of two sensitivity measurements, four test sets, and two error-count measurements. The first set was run at −8 dBm (decibels referenced to 1 milliwatt, measured at the modem), the second at −16 dBm, and the third at −26 dBm. The fourth set was run at −8 dBm. All levels were set using the 2225-Hertz answer tone of the AT&T 2224B reference modem.

A test group consisted of 23 single-impairment tests. I increased the level of each impairment until the modem under test started to generate errors. I then backed the level of impairment off until the modem transmitted data for 15 seconds without error. (See the text box “Impairment Parameters” on page 213 for a detailed description of the impairments.)

Error Count and Throughput
The real test of a modem is how well it transfers data in the face of anything a telephone line can throw at it. The main difference between this evaluation and the real test of a modem is more of a “street test” of the telephone line as defined in the AT&T/Bell Laboratories’ “1982/83 End Office Connection Study.” Here I threw only three impairments at the modems: 4 degrees of 60-Hz phase modulation, 1 percent of second- and third-order harmonic distortion, white noise at 23 dB below the signal level, and a combined phase and amplitude hit of 10 degrees and 2 dB once every 5 seconds. The modems were allowed to sit with the connection for 15 seconds; I then took error counts and a character throughput count for two minutes.

The second error-count test, which I did not perform in my previous evaluation, is more of a “street test” of the modems, simulating a typical 1983 average telephone line as defined in the “1982/83 End Office Connection Study.” Here I threw only three impairments at the modems: 4 degrees of 60-Hz phase modulation, 1 percent of second- and third-order harmonic distortion, and a 33-dB signal-to-white-noise distortion. All the modems breezed past this two-minute test at 300, 1200, and 2400 bps. This data, therefore, does not appear in the result tables.

For the three high-speed modems, I contrived an additional set of throughput tests for their top speeds. All these tests were run with an interface speed of 19,200 bps for five minutes to reduce

![Figure 1: The impairment-generating test setup used for modem evaluation.](image)

Table 5: Results of the 300-bps connection test. With the exception of White Noise, higher numbers indicate better performance. The number-of-errors and throughput results are from worst-case tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sens</th>
<th>P-mod</th>
<th>A-mod</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>G-hit</th>
<th>P-hit</th>
<th>Err</th>
<th>CPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CER</td>
<td>−39</td>
<td>45 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>70 to 80</td>
<td>13 to 12</td>
<td>11 to 14</td>
<td>70 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTS</td>
<td>−40</td>
<td>55 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>70 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>12 to 10</td>
<td>18 to &gt; 20</td>
<td>65 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCA</td>
<td>−39</td>
<td>30 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>20 to 60</td>
<td>16 to 14</td>
<td>6 to 11</td>
<td>60 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EV</td>
<td>−40</td>
<td>45 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>70 to 80</td>
<td>13 to 12</td>
<td>12 to 14</td>
<td>70 to 90</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAY</td>
<td>−40</td>
<td>45 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>60 to 60</td>
<td>13 to 11</td>
<td>11 to 14</td>
<td>60 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MER</td>
<td>−42</td>
<td>50 to 65</td>
<td>65 to 65</td>
<td>13 to 11</td>
<td>5 to 08</td>
<td>65 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMN</td>
<td>−44</td>
<td>35 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>35 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>27 to 26</td>
<td>7 to &gt; 20</td>
<td>30 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEL</td>
<td>−39</td>
<td>30 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>20 to 60</td>
<td>16 to 14</td>
<td>6 to 11</td>
<td>60 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USR</td>
<td>−36</td>
<td>25 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>30 to 55</td>
<td>25 to 24</td>
<td>4 to 10</td>
<td>35 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEN</td>
<td>−35</td>
<td>45 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>60 to 60</td>
<td>14 to 13</td>
<td>10 to 14</td>
<td>55 to &gt; 85</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An entry of 29 in the CPS column indicates a perfect run at 300 bps due to the test program truncating the cps to whole characters and the timing starting at the beginning of the test instead of when the first character reaches the serial port.
Impairment Parameters

The following are the details of the impairment parameters I used to test the 10 modems. Based on the "1982/83 End Office Connection Study," I used two distinct impairment levels: a level of impairment higher than that measured on 95 percent of the connections in the study (the 95 percent level), and a level higher than that measured on 50 percent of the connections (the 50 percent level).

Table 4 lists the abbreviations of the test parameters as they appear in the test results. In cases where all modems passed the tests, I did not list the results.

Sensitivity
A sensitivity measurement determines the lowest signal level at which the modem will answer and receive random data without errors for 30 seconds. This is a signed value, so lower numbers in the tables represent better performance; that is, —45 is better than —40.

Phase Modulation
Phase modulation (also known as phase jitter) is a regular back-and-forth shift in the waveform with respect to time. Moderate amounts of phase modulation should not affect 300-bps operation. Other more complex modulation methods use phase modulation to encode symbols, so any unwanted phase modulation can make decoding difficult or impossible. I used steps of 5 degrees and took measurements at 20 Hz, 60 Hz, and 120 Hz. I found the frequency band from 10 Hz and 300 Hz to be the most sensitive to phase modulation. Higher numbers in the tables represent better performance. The 95 percent level is 8 degrees, and the 50 percent level is 4 degrees.

Amplitude Modulation
Amplitude modulation is a regular change in signal level. It is the equivalent of turning a volume control up and down at a regular rate. I used steps of 5 percent and took measurements at 20 Hz, 60 Hz, and 120 Hz. Higher numbers in the tables represent better performance. The 95 percent level is 8 degrees, and the 50 percent level is 4 degrees.

White Noise
White noise, the hiss you hear on long-distance calls, is a band noise distributed evenly throughout the frequency spectrum. As this noise gets louder in relation to the signal level, the modem has a harder time determining what is part of a symbol and what is background noise. The values reported in the tables are the differences between the noise level and the signal level. I made adjustments in 1-dB increments. The connection study reports noise in absolute levels. From my —8-dBm reference, the 95 percent level is 43 dB, and the 50 percent level is 53 dB. From the —16-dBm level used in the error-count test, the 95 percent value is 35 dB, and the 50 percent value is 45 dB. In other words, a higher dB value indicates less noise in relation to the signal; 45 dB is a noise level that is 45 dB below the indicated signal level. Therefore, lower number values indicate better noise rejection.

Gain (Amplitude) Hit
A gain hit is a long-term step in the level of the signal; I used steps of 5 percent. The modem was subjected to one gain hit per second. Each hit shifted the level, held the new level for 100 milliseconds, and then shifted the level back. Three shift speeds, which measure the time required to accomplish the shift, were used: 20 ms, 2 ms, and 200 microseconds. Adjustment was in 5 percent increments. Higher numbers in the tables represent better performance. No gain hits were counted in five minutes at either the 95 percent level or the 50 percent level.

Phase Hit
A phase hit is a short-term shift out of phase, with possibly a shift back. Each modem was subjected to one hit per second. Each hit shifted the signal, held the shift for 100 ms, and then unshifted the signal. I tested three shift speeds: 2 ms, 20 ms, and 200 ms (essentially instantaneous). Adjustment was in 5 percent increments here also. Higher numbers in the tables represent better performance. One 10- or 15-degree hit in five minutes is the 95 percent level, and no hit is the 50 percent level.

Frequency Shift
A frequency shift is a long-term translation of signal frequency. No modem in this or the prior evaluation was affected by a shift of as much as 5 Hz up or down. Testing was complicated by the Bradley 2A/2B's tendency to change the signal's amplitude as I changed the frequency. Once I equalized this, all the modems turned in error-free performance.

Single-Frequency Interference
Single-frequency interference is a single-frequency signal superimposed on the modem signal. For this evaluation, I restricted single-frequency interference to 20 Hz, 60 Hz, and 120 Hz. No modem was affected by a level exceeding 6 to 8 dB above the modem signal level.

Harmonic (Nonlinear) Distortion
This impairment is almost always due to a telephone line amplifier that does not faithfully represent at its output what it sees in its input. No modem in either of my evaluations was affected by a level of 5 percent of both second- and third-order harmonic distortion.

The "1982/83 End Office Connection Study" does not provide information for harmonic distortion but instead reports intermodulation distortion. The 95 percent level is under 2 percent intermodulation distortion, and the 50 percent level is under 1 percent IMD for both second- and third-order IMD.

Impulse Noise
Impulse noise is a transient voltage (amplitude) spike on the transmitted signal caused by lightning, relays, repairs, or other causes. None of the modems reviewed was affected by impulse noise that was 2 dB above the signal level.
REVIEW: 10 INTERNAL MODEMS

**Table 6: Results of the 1200-bps connection test.** With the exception of White Noise, higher numbers indicate better performance. The number-of-errors and throughput results are from worst-case tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sens</th>
<th>P-mod</th>
<th>A-mod</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>G-hit</th>
<th>P-hit</th>
<th>Err</th>
<th>CPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CER</td>
<td>-38</td>
<td>65 to 75</td>
<td>70 to &gt;85</td>
<td>12-11</td>
<td>16 to &gt;20</td>
<td>40 to 65</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTS</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>25 to 65</td>
<td>30 to 50</td>
<td>14-13</td>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>30 to 60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCA</td>
<td>-44</td>
<td>40 to &gt;85</td>
<td>10 to 70</td>
<td>13-12</td>
<td>7 to 9</td>
<td>35 to &gt;85</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EV</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>60 to 70</td>
<td>75 to &gt;85</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>18 to &gt;20</td>
<td>40 to 65</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAY</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>60 to 70</td>
<td>70 to &gt;85</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td>18 to &gt;20</td>
<td>40 to 65</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MER</td>
<td>-43</td>
<td>60 to 70</td>
<td>65 to 90</td>
<td>12-11</td>
<td>5 to 8</td>
<td>35 to 65</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMN</td>
<td>-43</td>
<td>50 to &gt;85</td>
<td>50 to &gt;85</td>
<td>14-13</td>
<td>16 to &gt;20</td>
<td>40 to &gt;85</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEL</td>
<td>-44</td>
<td>40 to &gt;85</td>
<td>10 to 70</td>
<td>13-12</td>
<td>7 to 9</td>
<td>35 to &gt;85</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USR</td>
<td>-36</td>
<td>35 to 70</td>
<td>50 to 75</td>
<td>16-12</td>
<td>3 to 7</td>
<td>40 to 90</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEN</td>
<td>-38</td>
<td>65 to 75</td>
<td>75 to 80</td>
<td>12-12</td>
<td>16 to &gt;20</td>
<td>35 to 65</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An entry of 119 in the CPS column indicates a perfect run at 1200 bps due to the test program truncating the cps to whole characters and the timing starting at the beginning of the test instead of when the first character reaches the serial port.

**Table 7: Results of the 2400-bps connection test.** With the exception of White Noise, higher numbers indicate better performance. The number-of-errors and throughput results are from worst-case tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sens</th>
<th>P-mod</th>
<th>A-mod</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>G-hit</th>
<th>P-hit</th>
<th>Err</th>
<th>CPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CER</td>
<td>-38</td>
<td>20 to 30</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>21 to 20</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>15 to 35</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTS</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>5 to 20</td>
<td>5 to 20</td>
<td>22 to 22</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>10 to 25</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCA</td>
<td>-39</td>
<td>20 to 60</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>23 to 21</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>15 to 70</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EV</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>22 to 21</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>15 to 30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAY</td>
<td>-40</td>
<td>20 to 30</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>21 to 20</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>15 to 35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MER</td>
<td>-43</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>21 to 20</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>15 to 30</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMN</td>
<td>-39</td>
<td>10 to 25</td>
<td>15 to 20</td>
<td>21 to 20</td>
<td>2 to 2</td>
<td>15 to 40</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEL</td>
<td>-39</td>
<td>20 to 60</td>
<td>20 to 25</td>
<td>23 to 21</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>15 to 70</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USR</td>
<td>-32</td>
<td>10 to 15</td>
<td>10 to 15</td>
<td>24 to 21</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>15 to 30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEN</td>
<td>-38</td>
<td>15 to 25</td>
<td>15 to 25</td>
<td>21 to 20</td>
<td>2 to 3</td>
<td>15 to 30</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The OmniTel Encore 2400 HB would not pass the worst-case phase-modulation impairment test, and it disconnected. It passed all the other tests.

An entry of 239 in the CPS column would be a perfect run at 2400 bps due to the test program truncating the cps to whole characters and the timing starting at the beginning of the test instead of when the first character reaches the serial port.

**Table 8: High-speed 19,000-bps connection test results.** The Worst results are from a torture-track test. The Modified Worst results are from a torture-track test with the noise at 28 dB below a signal of -16 dBm. The Average results are from a street test. The Best results are obtained when there are no line impairments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sens</th>
<th>Modified Worst</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Best</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EV</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEL</td>
<td>0 265</td>
<td>0 555</td>
<td>0 886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCA</td>
<td>0 265</td>
<td>0 555</td>
<td>0 886</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Unit failed to connect under worst-case conditions.

Assuming that the modem gets to the serial port hardware. (For a complete tabulation of the test results, see tables 4 through 8.)

**Winners and Losers**

Common wisdom says that "if all else fails, use 300 bps." Unfortunately, this rule of thumb does not hold for the USRobotics Microlink 2400 and the OmniTel Encore 2400 HB. The problem is that these modems are more susceptible to noise than the others by more than 10 dB. I was able to verify this by reducing the white noise level by 6 dB with the Microlink 2400 and was rewarded by an error-free run (see table 5).

When the going was easy, all modems performed well at 2400 bps and worked well with local connections. When the going got tough, they all had problems at...
REVIEW: 10 INTERNAL MODEMS

2400 bps. The modem that performed best in this test was the Hayes Smartmodem 2400B, followed closely by, in order of performance, the Fastcomm 2496B, Cermetek 2400 SPC, Telebit TrailBlazer, DCA IRMA Fastlink, USRobotics Microlink 2400, and the HalfPak #24. The Mercury Fastmodem and the VenTel Half Card 24 brought up the rear. The OmniTel Encore 2400 HB never made it out of the starting gate; it failed to establish a connection on my worst-case line with the reference modem.

All 10 modems passed the street test and handled the torture-track test at 1200 bps without problems. This is a welcome finding, since more and more bulletin board services offer connections at 1200 bps.

Finally, with the high-speed modems, making the initial connection in the torture-track tests required repeated attempts. I almost gave up on the Telebit TrailBlazer, but I had to give it just one more try and was astounded when it connected and passed data. The Fastcomm 9600 Turbo couldn’t operate when the white noise was 23 dB below the signal level, but at 28 dB it was fine. The TrailBlazer and the DCA IRMA Fastlink proved to be faster modems, but they are also more expensive.

The winner in the 300/1200/2400-bps modem class is the Cermetek 2400 SPC ($395 for the modem only, $445 with Mirror software). It placed third in the torture-track test. Its lack of a speaker-control command, a wait-for-dial-tone command, and its nonstandard call-progress result codes can cause trouble with software that relies on exact result codes but, overall, it is the clear winner of the price/performance trade-off.

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• EXE File Compression Utility.
• EXE File Header Utility.

C Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computer</th>
<th>Microsoft C 4.0</th>
<th>Lattice C 3.0 / 5.0</th>
<th>Computer Innovision 2.3</th>
<th>Attec C86 3.2</th>
<th>Wizard C 3.0</th>
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<td>151.4</td>
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<td>231.7</td>
<td>199.0</td>
<td>123.8</td>
<td>189.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Run on an IBM PC XT with 512K memory

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Window-oriented source-level debugger. NEW!
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Inquiry 68
Compaq's New Carryon

John Unger

The Compaq Portable III Model 20 is neither a laptop nor a desktop computer; it lies somewhere between the two. Its size (10 by 16 by 8 inches), weight (20 pounds), and AC line voltage (instead of batteries) dictate that it should reside on a desk or tabletop. However, it is also smaller and lighter than the average desktop computer — small enough to fit under an airline seat or in an overhead rack and light enough to be carried. It is the smallest and lightest of Compaq's portables to date: It is two-thirds the size and three-quarters the weight of the Portable II Model 4.

The Portable III's 80286 microprocessor is user-switchable between 12 and 8 MHz. The computer can also use an optional 8-MHz 80287 math coprocessor. It has 640K bytes of RAM on its main board and comes in three configurations: the Model 1 ($3999), which includes a 1.2-megabyte floppy disk drive; the Model 20 ($4999), the unit that I reviewed, which comes with the same size floppy disk drive and a 20-megabyte shock-mounted 3½-inch hard disk drive; and the Model 40 ($5799), which has a 40-megabyte hard disk drive in addition to the floppy disk drive. The machine also features a high-contrast, dual-mode (640- by 400-pixel text/graphics mode and 640- by 200-/320- by 200-pixel IBM CGA mode) gas-plasma display, a full-size detachable keyboard with a numeric keypad, a hefty power supply, and a voltage sensor for the power line with automatic switching between 110 and 220 volts (domestic and international currents, respectively). Options include a 360K-byte floppy disk drive to use in place of the 1.2-megabyte floppy drive, an external expansion unit capable of containing two full-length PC AT-compatible 8- or 16-bit add-on cards, an internal 300/1200-bps Hayes-compatible modem, and up to 6.6 megabytes of RAM.

The exterior case of the Portable III is made of light gray plastic, and, except for the power supply's case and the metal cage holding the disk drives, all its internal partitions and structural elements are also plastic. The inside of the Portable III and the expansion unit are coated with a metalized spray to suppress RFI (radio-frequency interference). The keyboard fits securely over the gas-plasma display to protect it when you carry the computer. After sliding two plastic latches to detach the keyboard and expose the display, you simply plug in the Portable III to get it up and running. The power switch is located at the bottom of the left rear of the computer: a green LED in the upper right corner of the front panel glows when the computer is turned on. Depressing two more plastic latches on the top edge of the display screen releases the display and activates an ingenious arrangement of levers and grooves that enable you to raise the display about 4 inches and tilt it forward or backward 10 to 15 degrees. An optional desktop tilt-and-swivel pedestal provides a secure base for the computer, raises it 2 inches, and gives the unit and its display a wide range of viewing angles.

The organization of the Portable III's major components is straightforward. Its internal layout is composed of three sections. The screen occupies the front section, the main circuit board and I/O interfaces are mounted in the rear section, and the space in the middle is taken up by the power supply and disk drives.

A large and comfortably padded handle is located on the top of the Portable III. If you need to move the computer for any great distance, you will want the optional padded carrying case; its shoulder strap makes the 20-pound computer easier to carry, and the padding protects it.

Unlike the smaller keyboards found on laptop computers, the Portable III's keyboard is large enough for a full-function keypad/cursor section on its right side. Its overall layout is similar to that found on the early IBM PC ATs except that the 10 function keys are located in a row across the top. The keys have a somewhat
**REVIEW: COMPAQ PORTABLE III**

**Company**
Compaq Computer Corp.
20555 FM 149
Houston, TX 77070
(713) 370-0670

**Size**
10 by 16 by 8 inches, 20 pounds

**Components**
Processor: 16-bit 80286 running at 8 or 12 MHz; optional 80287 math coprocessor running at 8 MHz
Memory: 640K bytes of 100-ns RAM, expandable to 6.6 megabytes internally
Mass storage: One 1.2-megabyte floppy disk drive and one 20-megabyte hard disk drive
Display: Red-orange 5⅜-by-8⅜-inch flat gas-plasma with 80-column by 25-row text and 640-by-400-pixel high-resolution monochrome graphics; also emulates IBM CGA 320 by 200 and 640 by 200 modes
Keyboard: 84 keys; 10 function keys; separate keypad/cursor keys; LED indicators for Caps Lock, Num Lock, and Scroll Lock keys
I/O interfaces: RS-232C port with 9-pin D-shell male connector; Centronics-compatible parallel printer port with 25-pin D-shell female connector; RGB monitor port with 9-pin D-shell female connector

**Software**
ADAPT (Advanced Display Attribute Programming Tool); Screen-Save

**Options**
Internal modem: $399
20-megabyte hard disk drive: $1399
40-megabyte hard disk drive: $2199
360K-byte floppy disk drive: $225
External expansion unit: $199
Compaq enhanced color graphics board: $599
Compaq color monitor: $799
Memory-expansion board: $225
512K-byte memory upgrade: $250
2-megabyte memory upgrade: $1299
8-MHz 80287 math coprocessor: $349
Nylon carrying case: $89
Desktop pedestal: $89
MS-DOS/BASIC release 3.2: $95

**Documentation**
Operations Guide, 58 pages

**Price**
Model 1: $3999
Model 20: $4999
Model 40: $5799

**DISK ACCESS IN BASIC (IN SECONDS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WRITE</th>
<th>READ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<td>198</td>
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<tr>
<td>396</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>594</td>
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**BASIC PERFORMANCE (IN SECONDS)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SIEVE</th>
<th>CALCULATIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>1111111111111111111111 54</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
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**SYSTEM UTILITIES (IN SECONDS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>40K FORMAT/DISK COPY</th>
<th>40K FILE COPY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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**SPREADSHEET (IN SECONDS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECALCULATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
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</table>

The graphs for Disk Access in BASIC show how long it takes to write and then read a 64K-byte sequential text file to a 20-megabyte hard disk. (For the program listings, see BYTE's Inside the IBM PCs, Fall 1985, page 195.) The Sieve graph shows how long it takes to run one iteration of the Sieve of Eratosthenes prime-number benchmark. The Calculations graph shows how long it takes to do 10,000 multiplication and 10,000 division operations using single-precision numbers. The 40K Format Disk Copy benchmark was not performed because the computers had only one floppy disk drive. The 40K File Copy graph shows how long it takes to copy a 40K-byte file from a floppy to a hard disk using system utilities. The Spreadsheet graphs show how long it takes to load and recalculate a 100-row by 25-column Microsoft Multiplan (1.10) spreadsheet in which each cell equals 1.001 times the cell to its left. All BASIC benchmark programs were run with MS-DOS 3.10 and GW-BASIC 3.0.
softer feel than the PC AT's and give very little audible feedback. However, by pressing the Ctrl/Alt/+ key combination, you can increase the volume of a software-generated click from low to full volume over a range of 15 distinct levels. The Ctrl/Alt/— key combination decreases the volume.

The tightly coiled cable that connects the detached keyboard to the main unit begins to pull the keyboard out of your grasp when you try to get farther away than about two feet from the main unit. This is a nuisance if you like to type on your lap. Also, the cable runs diagonally from the left rear of the keyboard to the right front of the computer; you can't move the keyboard away from the main unit without the cable's tending to twist it clockwise. The bottom rear of the keyboard has two small plastic feet that flip out and raise it about \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch.

**High-Horsepower Hardware**

The Portable III is made for speed. Its 80286 runs at 12 MHz, a speed unmatched by many full-size desktop computers. You can use the Ctrl/Alt/\ (backslash) key combination to toggle between 12 and 8 MHz, or you can use Compaq's AUTO mode, which allows the 80286 to run at 12 MHz and automatically switch to 8 MHz when accessing the floppy disk drive to avoid copy-protection-scheme compatibility problems.

The boards in the optional external expansion unit operate at 8 MHz (with the 80286 at either 12 or 8 MHz). The machine has no hardware reset switch for rebooting the system when the normal Ctrl/Alt/Del combination won't bail you out. In these cases, you must then turn the power switch off and on.

The optional 80287 coprocessor runs at 8 MHz regardless of the speed of the 80286, and the 640K bytes of RAM are made up of 100-ns 256K-bit chips. The RAM chips are mounted nine to a card and come in half-size DIP packages with connector pins at the ends and on the sides. They are mounted on the cards side-by-side and on top of each other, overlapping in a space-saving shingle-like fashion. Compaq uses CMOS gate arrays with surface-mount technology to implement six ASICs (application-specific integrated circuits) of its own design—three work with the 80286 to improve processing speed, one acts as the hard disk controller, one works with the floppy disk drive and the printer-interface controller, and one is for the gas-plasma display. All the system components, including the disk controller and display adapter circuits, are mounted on one system board (see photo 1).

The only empty area inside the tightly packed machine lies beneath the two disk drives, where the optional internal modem and RAM expansion slots are located. Once the memory-expansion board is installed, you can choose one of two possible memory-upgrade paths with 100-ns chips: The first uses 256K-bit RAM chips and consists of three modules of 512K bytes each; the second has 1-megabit RAM chips, and each of the three modules adds 2 megabytes to the system. The total amount of RAM available with the first option is 2.1 megabytes; the second option provides an impressive total of 6.6 megabytes of high-speed memory.

The internal modem and the memory-expansion board fit on the same internal memory/modem interface card. If you order either option, you also receive the interface card.

The power supply is rated at 145 watts and is adequate to power not only the internal components, but also any other add-on boards you might want to install in the continued
The display is as sharp as that found on any standard CRT.

The two-slot external expansion unit that attaches to the rear of the machine. The Portable III also has a small, quiet fan to pull cooling air in through the rear of the computer and exhaust it out the left side.

One of the Portable III's most interesting options is the external expansion unit, which is electrically connected to the computer by a 96-pin port (see photo 2). This unit is a more flexible option than the completely detached expansion units made for other portables. Because it gets its power from the computer via this port, you can securely attach it to the Portable III, leave it in place, and carry it with you as if it were part of the machine. You can also have more than one expansion unit configured for different needs, allowing considerable versatility. The expansion unit adds 2 1/2 inches to the depth of the Portable III. Compaq's enhanced color graphics board is not an internal option and, if installed, must be used in the external expansion unit. It is compatible with IBM's EGA. I did not test any expansion boards with my review unit.

Dual-Mode Gas-Plasma Display

The Portable III's gas-plasma screen displays clear, bright, orange-red pixels on an orange-tinted gray background. The display is as sharp and readable as that found on any standard CRT display and is steady and free from flicker. However, the 12-MHz microprocessor is so fast that when you scroll a long file with the TYPE command, the display becomes a blur; it's difficult to stop the scrolling where you want.

The display is thin—only about 1 1/4 inches thick. The screen surface is flat, so you must be careful about glare and reflections. For example, when bright lights or objects are in front of the screen, it can act like a mirror, making viewing difficult. The screen's aspect ratio is 1.6 to 1 (width to height), a bit larger than the 1.3 to 1 or 1.4 to 1 found on most CRTs but less than the aspect ratio on many laptop LCD displays, which generally ranges from the Toshiba T1100 Plus's 2.3 to 1 to the Bondwell 8's 3.1 to 1. (The Zenith Z-181 is unique to the laptop world with its 1.3 to 1 aspect-ratio screen.) The main impact of this difference is that the shapes produced on machines with other aspect ratios by graphics software written for a CRT will become more distorted as the aspect ratio diverges further from 1.3 to 1 or 1.4 to 1. For example, pie charts produced by Reflex look a bit squashed on the Portable III's screen but are not as badly distorted as they would be on the average laptop. A convenient dial located at the bottom right corner of the Portable III's front panel controls the display contrast and brightness. Although I used this control near its maximum level most of the time, I never felt as if I were running out of sufficient brightness.

The Portable III is highly compatible with the IBM PC AT: It runs IBM software and can use PC AT-type 16-bit bus expansion card's external expansion unit. It ran my collection of IBM software, including WordPerfect, Reflex, Ready!, WordStar, Jet, and Starflight, without a hitch. The major incompatibility is in the monochrome gas-plasma display. Although it can display graphics with software that uses the IBM CGA 320 by 200 mode, the gas-plasma display has a more limited range of intensity and therefore cannot display the various shades of gray used by a monochrome CRT to emulate colors. However, you can add an external color monitor via the RGB port to display full-color software.

In text mode, characters are formed from a 640 by 400 matrix of pixels. The display is shown in 80 columns by 25 rows; each character is derived from an 8- by 16-pixel matrix. The characters are not as sharp as those generated with the IBM Monochrome Display Adapter, but they are well formed and easy to read. The display shows all the normal monochrome text attributes except highlighting; that is, it displays normal, reverse-video, blinking, high-intensity, half-intensity, and underlined characters. I found it most effective to show highlighted text as half-intensity characters. For programs that use highlighting to distinguish between choices on a menu, the Portable III has two programs that allow you to display highlighted characters. One is an expanded version of the familiar Mode program that can use arguments that enable you to change the appearance of highlighted text. The other is a memory-resident program called ADAPT (Advanced Display Attribute Programming Tool), which you can use from within an application program to change the display. According to Compaq, the Portable III will come with a disk of supplemental programs, including ADAPT and ScreenSave, a program that lets you set an inactivity time limit at which the system will blank out the display. The Supplemental disk was unavailable at the time of this review.

Besides the standard IBM text and graphics modes, the Compaq BIOS includes a high-resolution (640- by 400-pixel) text/graphics mode for the gas-plasma display. You can access the 640 by 400 mode by calling mode 40h with the BIOS video interrupt 10h, the same as that used by the AT&T PC 6300 to access its 640 by 400 monochrome graphics. This means that you can use graphics-based software that has an AT&T PC 6300 high-resolution driver, such as Microsoft Windows or Borland's Reflex, to obtain the Portable III's high resolution. When I used Reflex's AT&T driver with the Portable III, Reflex displayed in 43-line text mode as well as 640- by 400-pixel high-resolution graphics mode. The Portable III also functioned perfectly with graphics software I have written specifically for the PC 6300's high-resolution mode.

Internal and External Peripherals

The Portable III Model 1 comes with a single 1.2-megabyte one-third-height 5 1/4-inch floppy disk drive. I had no trouble formatting or writing files to 360K-byte floppy disks with this drive, nor did I have any problem reading those files on my PC 6300's standard 360K-byte drive.

To use this computer to its fullest, you will need a hard disk of some kind. The performance of the Model 20's 20-megabyte hard disk at 12 MHz on the Write benchmark shows a 48 percent improvement over that of the 8-MHz IBM PC AT. Even at 8 MHz, the Model 20's increase is 29 percent (see the benchmark results on page 000). The Read benchmarks also show improvements, although they are more modest: 26 percent at 12 MHz and 2 percent at 8 MHz. Compaq rates its hard disk's access time at less than 30 ms; my tests measured an average access time of 26 ms.

Two LEDs located below the power indicator turn on when there is activity in either the floppy or the hard disk. The documentation says that the floppy disk's LED is supposed to be orange when the computer reads or writes to a 360K-byte disk and green when it accesses 1.2-megabyte floppies, but I got a green light regardless of the type of disk I used. Both drives are extremely quiet, and the only clue you have that the hard disk is doing anything is its blinking LED.

The Portable III comes with a standard Centronics-compatible parallel printer port with a 25-pin female connector and an RS-232C serial port with a 9-pin male connector like the IBM PC AT's. The CGA-compatible display card has a 9-pin female port for connecting an optional ROB monitor. The memory-expansion card and internal modem attach to an internal connector on the system board. The modem installation kit also includes...
standard telephone jacks that are accessible on the right side of the computer beneath the disk drives. A sliding panel on the rear of the computer conceals a 96-pin male connector for attaching the external expansion box.

Documentation and Service
The documentation that came with my review unit was in preliminary form. Both the Operations Guide and the optional MS-DOS Reference Guide are essential for using the Portable III. (The MS-DOS guide comes with the optional MS-DOS 3.2 operating system.) The optional Technical Reference Guide is valuable if you want to access some of the machine's special features, such as writing software that manipulates the dual modes of the gas-plasma display, but you won't need it to operate the machine with regular software.

The Portable III has a one-year limited warranty for parts and repairs on the computer and internal options installed by an authorized Compaq dealer; external options such as the color monitor and the expansion unit are not covered under this warranty but have their own warranty coverage (usually 90 days). You can obtain warranty service from Compaq or an authorized dealer, but you are responsible for the transportation to Compaq or the dealer.

Performance and Portability
At the present time, there is nothing else available in a portable with the computing power of the Compaq Portable III. The 12-MHz 80286 microprocessor, large potential memory capacity, and fast hard disks make this machine a stunning performer. The Sieve and Calculations benchmarks show that the computer is significantly faster than an 8-MHz IBM PC AT. Because of obvious similarities—the gas-plasma display, 80286 microprocessor, and internal hard disk—the microcomputer will inevitably be compared to the Toshiba T3100. The T3100 is smaller, five pounds lighter, and, although it needs an AC power source like the Portable III, it looks and feels more like a true laptop. However, the T3100's 10-megabyte hard disk drive has a slower average access time (between 80 and 90 ms) and microprocessor (8 MHz). The Portable III Model 20 clearly outperforms the T3100; however, it also costs $800 more.

The Portable III does not sacrifice performance for portability. While Compaq designed it as a carryon, you can add options such as the two-card expansion unit, internal memory expansion and modem, and desktop pedestal to make it into a full-featured desktop machine.

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For use with IBM PC, PC/XT and compatibles

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JUKO G7-B US$160.00
The Commodore 64C

Alastair J. W. Mayer

The Commodore 64C personal computer is simply the old Commodore 64 repackaged in a beige C-128-style case and bundled with the disk-based GEOS (graphics environment operating system) version 1.3. The GEOS is a surprisingly good window and icon operating system, considering that it runs on an 8-bit microprocessor in 64K bytes of memory. The combination sells for $229.95; you can purchase the GEOS software separately for $59.95 if you already own a C-64 or a C-128. The 64C’s case is more attractive than that of the C-64, and the mechanical action of the keyboard is slightly more responsive, though it is still not great.

For those not familiar with the hardware of the C-64, both it and the 64C use the 6502-compatible 6510A microprocessor running at 1.02 MHz. (For more information, see the review of the Commodore 64 by Stan Wszola in the July 1983 BYTE.) It has 20K bytes of ROM, which contains the operating system and the BASIC interpreter version 2.0; 64K bytes of RAM; 320-by-200-pixel graphics; up to 16 colors (although the graphic modes restrict your choices); an impressive three-voice Sound Interface Device (SID); and, alas, a slow serial disk interface, although the GEOS uses some proprietary techniques to speed this up.

Some recent additions to the line of peripherals available from Commodore for the 64C are the 1541C disk drive ($229) which, internally, is the same as the 1541, but it has a beige case to match that of the 64C. The 1351 two-button mouse ($49), which can operate in either proportional or joystick mode, is quite an improvement over the 1350 two-button mouse, which could operate only in joystick mode. In joystick mode, the 1351 mouse transmits joystick-like commands to the computer, for example, move up, move down, move right, and move left, depending on which direction you move the mouse. In proportional mode, the mouse knows and transmits its position as an analog signal (in modulo 64) to the computer. A proportional mouse is more responsive, but the joystick mode is provided for use with joystick-compatible software. The 1802 color monitor ($249) accepts both composite and RGB video signals and has a button on the front that changes the screen to green. According to Commodore, the 1764 RAM expander ($149), which boosts the system RAM to 256K bytes, will be available this spring. This expander, a cartridge that plugs into the cartridge/expansion port, comes with an external power supply. Due to limitations of the built-in BASIC interpreter, the extra RAM is accessible only if you use machine language programs or PEEKs and POKEs, or you can use it as a RAM disk.

GEOS—The 64C Does Windows

GEOS, developed by Berkeley Softworks, is an icon-oriented system similar to the Xerox PARC model popularized by the Macintosh. It provides windows and icons, and you can control it by using the cursor keys, a mouse, or a joystick. Drivers are also included for bit pads, such as the Koala Pad, and for light pens.

Berkeley Softworks has implemented a copy-protection scheme wherein you must always boot from the original GEOS disk. The first thing that you should do when you start working with GEOS is make a backup of the system disk so that if you accidentally delete or otherwise lose a file on the original disk, you can restore it from the backup. However, if the original disk gets physically trashed, you are out of luck. Once you’ve backed up the GEOS disk, you must create a work disk—a pared-down system disk that you can use once you have loaded GEOS.

GEOS comes on one double-sided disk. On one side is the GEOS operating system, geoPaint, and geoWrite, and on the opposite side is a telecommunications program, Q-Link, for accessing QuantumLink (a bulletin board designed specifically...continued

Alastair J. W. Mayer is a member of GeoVision Corp. (1600 Carling Ave., Suite 350, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1Z 8R7), a developer of geographic information systems. He is also the author of CoSy, the BIX conferencing software.
GEOS is impressive, considering it’s used on a five-year-old, 8-bit computer.

specifically for Commodore users). The GEOS provided with the 64C also includes a tailored work disk.

Desktop and Accessories
The GEOS desktop (see photo 1) consists of a pull-down menu bar along the top, icons representing the disk drive or drives, a wastebasket and printer, and a Disk Notepad window, initially showing icons for the active disk. The Disk Notepad window works a little differently than that on the Macintosh or the Atari ST. On the latter machines, the disk window is a viewport for a larger area. If there are too many file icons to fit the display all at once, you can scroll the Disk Notepad window up and down or sideways. In GEOS, the Disk Notepad page has room for eight files, and its size and position on the screen are fixed. The technique GEOS uses is to let you “flip the pages” of the window as though it were a book. While the GEOS desktop is not as versatile or elegant as that of the Macintosh or Atari ST, it’s pretty impressive when you remember that GEOS is implemented on a five-year-old, 8-bit computer. The Macintosh and the Atari ST both use the 32-/16-bit 68000 microprocessor; the Macintosh has been around for only about two years, and the Atari ST for one year.

The desk accessories provided with the 64C are a notepad, a calculator, and a preference manager (similar to the Control Panel of the Macintosh) that allows you to set the time and date; set the velocity or edit the shape of the pointer; change the background, foreground, border, or pointer colors; and reset the values back to the standard GEOS default value. The photo manager and text manager enable you to cut and paste pictures and text among different applications.

The “language” of mouse-button clicks and moves is similar, but not identical, to that used by the Macintosh and the Atari ST. As with the other systems, double-clicking on an icon on the 64C will open that file or activate that application. However, with the other two systems, you hold the mouse button down throughout the entire operation, using a technique commonly referred to as press-drag-release. With GEOS, you do not hold the mouse button down throughout the entire operation; instead, dragging an icon (or a drawing in the paint program) is done by clicking once, moving the mouse, and clicking again (called a click-drag-click). The problem with this procedure is that if you are a little slow in double-clicking to open an application, GEOS may instead interpret this as a click-drag-click.

You can run Commodore’s BASIC interpreter from the GEOS desktop by choosing “BASIC” from the menu. GEOS replaces the default nonmaskable interrupt vector with the reboot code vector for the desktop, which is located between C000 and C100 hexadecimal. This enables you to reboot the desktop from the original GEOS disk by pressing the Restore key. It takes the same amount of time to reload the GEOS desktop whether you type LOAD “GEOS” 8,1 or hit the Restore key; however, the latter method saves you some keystrokes.

If your BASIC program is smaller than 26K bytes, the GEOS will be able to use some of its techniques for speeding the program’s load into memory. Otherwise, you use the normal Commodore DOS routines.

While Berkeley Softworks will not disclose the techniques it uses to speed up the serial drives, one well-known technique is to use the clock line as a data line, which gives you two data lines going into the drive, and then to asynchronously send information to the disk drive. You can also shorten the software timing loops used to control this process. Shortening the timing loops may make the serial transfer more prone to noise, but this has not been a problem from my experience.

Since the GEOS is necessarily disk-based, it is somewhat limited by the serial drive speeds. The software speedups that Berkeley Softworks includes with GEOS help some. It also helps if you have a second disk drive. Installing the second drive is simple; if it is configured as a peripheral other than unit 8, nothing further needs to be done. Otherwise, you turn the drives on at a time, selecting “install drive” from the pull-down menu before turning on the second drive. Having two drives is almost a necessity if you are going to make extensive use of geoPaint: On a single-drive system, the software insists that a copy of the program must exist on the same disk as the data files. (Copying geoPaint is permitted; only the GEOS kernel is copy-protected.)

GeoPaint version 1.2, a paint program, and geoWrite version 1.2, a word processor, are easily integrated with GEOS; you simply double-click on their respective icons. GeoPaint provides a window onto a full 8½- by 11-inch page and enables you to combine images and text on a document. A full array of brush styles, fill patterns, and colors is provided, although I had occasional problems with color due to the way the 64C’s graphic modes work: The screen can contain all 16 colors at once, but any 8- by 8-pixel region is restricted to two colors in high-resolution mode, and 4- by 8-pixel regions are restricted to four colors in medium-resolution mode.

GeoWrite comes with a small font library. You can display a variety of text

Photo 1: The GEOS desktop.
**Commodore 64C**

**Company**
Commodore Business Machines Inc.
1200 Wilson Dr.
West Chester, PA 19380
(215) 431-9100

**Size**
16 by 8 by 3 inches

**Components**
Processor: 6510A running at 1.02 MHz
Memory: 20K bytes of ROM; 64K bytes of RAM, expandable to 256K bytes
Mass storage: See Options
Display: 40-column by 25-row text; 320-by 200-pixel high-resolution graphics
Keyboard: 66-key Commodore 64-style keyboard; four function keys; keyboard-selectable graphic characters and character colors
I/O interfaces: Two 9-pin control ports; 44-pin bus-expansion port; RF output; video, serial, cassette, and general-purpose user ports

**Software**
BASIC 2.0 in ROM; GEOS 1.3 operating system; geoWrite 1.2; geoPaint 1.2; QuantumLink V.4 Telecom

**Options**
1764 RAM expander: $149
1802 color monitor: $249
1541C disk drive: $229
1351 mouse: $49
GEOS software: $59.95

**Documentation**
Commodore 64C Introductory Guide, 32 pages
Commodore 64C System Guide, 198 pages
GEOS and QuantumLink User’s Guide, 126 pages

**Price**
$229.95

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The graphs for Disk Access in BASIC show how long it takes to write and then read a 64K-byte sequential text file to a blank floppy disk. (For the program listings, see BYTE’s Inside the IBM PCs, Fall 1985, page 195.) The Sieve graph shows how long it takes to run one iteration of the Sieve of Eratosthenes prime-number benchmark. The Calculations graph shows how long it takes to do 10,000 multiplication and 10,000 division operations using single-precision numbers. The System Utilities graphs show how long it takes to format a disk using the 1541C drive. Also shown is the time required to copy a 40K-byte file using the system utilities. The times for the Commodore 128 with a 1571 drive are shown as a comparison.

The graphs for Disk Access in BASIC show how long it takes to write and then read a 64K-byte sequential text file to a blank floppy disk. (For the program listings, see BYTE’s Inside the IBM PCs, Fall 1985, page 195.) The Sieve graph shows how long it takes to run one iteration of the Sieve of Eratosthenes prime-number benchmark. The Calculations graph shows how long it takes to do 10,000 multiplication and 10,000 division operations using single-precision numbers. The System Utilities graphs show how long it takes to format a disk using the 1541C drive. Also shown is the time required to copy a 40K-byte file using the system utilities. The times for the Commodore 128 with a 1571 drive are shown as a comparison.

fonts simultaneously on the 64C’s screen with GEOS, since it uses the graphic screen rather than the character screen. You can also print these text fonts.

**Setup and Documentation**
The 64C comes with a 32-page Commodore 64C Introductory Guide, which describes the various components: the monitor, disk drive, and all the necessary cables. Setup is quite easy: it is simply a matter of plugging the cables into the only connectors that they will fit and then turning everything on. The power transformer is a separate unit, as are the disk drive and the monitor. This can make for a bit of a cable snarl, and, when everything is set up, there is little clear space left on a desktop. A separate shelf for the monitor and disk drive is definitely recommended.

Also included with the 64C is a 198-page Commodore 64C System Guide, subtitled "Learning to Program in BASIC 2.0." The book includes examples of the various BASIC commands, as well as short sample programs for using the 64C’s graphics and sound capabilities. These use a lot of PEEKs and POKEs; BASIC 2.0 does not have built-in commands to manipulate graphics and sound. A novice programmer may want to look for something more tutorial about programming in general, and any programmer interested in digging into the system will want the separately available Commodore 64 Programmer’s Reference Guide.

The GEOS documentation is quite good, containing many examples. The 64C comes with a 126-page GEOS and QuantumLink User’s Guide for those people interested in writing GEOS applications. This manual is not recommended.
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SCSI Hard Disk Drives for the Macintosh

Chris Crawford and Eva White

Before the Macintosh Plus, the only way to add a hard disk to a Macintosh was through the slow floppy disk drive or the serial port. Although no SCSI (small computer system interface) drives were available at the time the Mac Plus was announced, third-party companies have wasted no time in coming out with fairly inexpensive drives. The benchmark tests on the 10 external 20-megabyte SCSI drives reviewed here indicate that they are all roughly comparable in performance. (See the complete benchmark results in table 1.) The 10 drives are the SuperMac DataFrame 20 and XP 20, General Computer's HyperDrive FX/20, Relax Technology's Hard Plus, the ProAPP 20, Western Computer's Big Mack Twinpack, Peripheral Land's PL20, Mirror Technologies' MagNet 20X, the LoDown 20, and Peak Systems' Plus-20. Potential buyers of hard disks should base their decisions on the support software provided (such as backup utilities and print spoolers), the drive's footprint, price, and, if expandability is important, the ease of daisy-chaining the drives.

Chaining SCSI Devices
One of the big selling points of SCSI devices is that you can daisy-chain up to seven of them together. Most SCSI devices come with two SCSI ports so that when you want to add another, you simply plug it into the unused port of the last one. Daisy-chaining these drives is fairly simple, but not without some drawbacks. Not all SCSI cables are alike. Some come with DB-25 SCSI ports and require a cable with a DB-25 connector on either end, while others come with 50-pin SCSI ports and require a cable with a DB-25 connector for plugging into the Mac and a 50-pin Amphenol connector on the other end for plugging into the drive. All the drives mentioned in this review come with their own cables, but you have to purchase a cable with 50-pin male connectors on both ends to chain the drives with 50-pin SCSI ports. The drives with the DB-25 connectors have the advantage since you can simply use the cables included with the drives to daisy-chain them together.

Once you have the right kinds of cables, you have to set the SCSI address of the drive. The HyperDrive FX/20 and the DataFrame XP 20 make this easy by allowing you to change the SCSI address with software. Two of the drives, the Big Mack Twinpack and the ProAPP 20, have DIP switches accessible on the outside of the drive case. All the other drives have jumpers on the SCSI controller card that you have to open the case to get to.

If you are chaining three or more drives, you must make sure the terminating resistor packs are present only on the drives on either end of the chain. The HyperDrive FX/20 comes with an external terminating resistor pack that you plug into the unused SCSI connector. The other drives have socketed resistor packs on the SCSI controller boards.

Distinguishing Characteristics
One problem with reviewing these drives is that the software, manuals, and, in some cases, even the drives themselves are changing rapidly. When we first received the review drives, much of the system software was buggy and unstable, and many of the manuals were photocopied 8-by-11-inch paper stapled in the upper left corner. Some of the manuals had diagrams that did not match the hardware. For example, the Peak Systems' Plus-20 manual explained how to chain drives, but it showed a picture of a controller board that looked nothing like the actual board inside the drive. According to the manual that came with the LoDown 20, there are plugs on the bottom of the case that you can pop out to get to the jumpers. Unfortunately, on the model we reviewed, the holes did not line up over the jumpers and we had to open the case to get to them. According to LoDown, a redesigned case will be shipped with later models.

Many of the manuals sidestepped the whole issue of daisy-chaining by recommending that only a service technician make any necessary changes. Each time we called the technical help line provided, we were able to locate the right jumpers and set the addresses. Also in most cases, we got an updated manual and the latest system software.

SuperMac Technology has a faster version of its DataFrame 20 drive, the DataFrame XP 20, which is supposed to be faster for large contiguous transfers to and from the disk. A DataFrame XP 20 costs $1299, but for $149 you can obtain a kit that upgrades a DataFrame 20 to an XP 20. You simply install a new ROM in the drive and change a jumper to complete the transformation. We upgraded our DataFrame 20 for this review. The benchmarks show only a slight speedup for the Boot test and for opening a 67K-byte MacWrite file. We backed up 10 megabytes from the comparison non-SCSI Apple Hard Disk 20 onto the DataFrame 20, installed the upgrade, and backed up again. This didn't show any real speedup, either; the backup took 798 seconds on the DataFrame 20 and 776 seconds on the DataFrame XP 20.

The HyperDrive FX/20 comes with more system software than the other drives, is rugged, and has a built-in hand...
**REVIEW: SCSI DRIVES**

Table 1: SCSI drive features, bundled software, and benchmark results. All dimension sizes are in inches; footprint sizes are in square inches. All times are in seconds. The benchmark tests were performed using Apple's System 3.2 and Finder 5.2. The Boot test was timed from the sound of the “bong” on the Mac Plus to the appearance of the File, Edit, View, and Special menus. LineWrite writes a single linear file 512K bytes long; FileRead reads that file. FragWrite writes sixteen 2K-byte files and then appends fifteen 2K-byte sections onto them in an interleaved fashion. Microsoft BASIC version 1.0 was used for these tests. The file entitled “What’s New,” which is included with MacWrite version 4.5, was used in the 67K-byte MacWrite file test. For comparison, we also performed benchmarks on the non-SCSI Apple Hard Disk 20. The Hard Disk 20 hooks up to the floppy port of the Macintosh. Contact the individual companies for the latest updates on hardware and software features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>DataFrame 20</th>
<th>DataFrame XP 20</th>
<th>HyperDrive FX/20</th>
<th>Hard 20 Plus</th>
<th>ProAPP 20</th>
<th>Big Mack Twinpack</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Company</strong></td>
<td>SuperMac Technology</td>
<td>SuperMac Technology</td>
<td>General Computer</td>
<td>Relax Technology Inc.</td>
<td>ProAPP Inc.</td>
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The design of the case gives the drive a lot of stability; it measures 3½ inches at the bottom and tapers off to 3 inches at the top. The FX/20 also lets you change the SCSI address in software.

Given that Relax Technology also retails surge-protected power strips, you might guess that its drive, the Hard 20 Plus, comes with a four-outlet, independently controlled power strip with a 30-decibel noise filter and surge and isolation suppression.

The Big Mack Twinpack comes with an integrated tape drive; it also comes with the most unstable system software of the group and a woefully thin manual entitled Temporary Operating Manual. A call to Western Computer's technical help line did not get us a new manual or updated software. We used a Teac CT-5000 high-density cassette drive to back up 10 megabytes; this took about 6 minutes. If we erased the tape first and then backed up the drive, we got a system bomb. The drive backed up with no problems if we didn't erase the tape first. Only backups of the entire disk are possible.

The LoDown 20 is the only bottom-placement drive of the group without a fan. The case is made of pressed metal and has ventilation holes on the bottom, side, and top. Although the drive heated up, we left it on under a running Macintosh for a couple of days with no problems. The LoDown 20 comes bundled with scads of public domain software and shareware, though none of the software fell into the categories listed in table 1. These programs can save you the connect charges and phone bills required to download them from bulletin boards, but, if you decide you want to use these programs, you must be sure and check to see if the author requires a shareware fee.

Peripheral Land's PL20 and Peak Systems' Plus-20 are solid, basic drives. The ProAPP 20's selling point is that you can also hook it up to the Apple Ile/Iic line. The drive has three ports on the back—a SCSI port, a floppy disk port, and a printer port.
REVIEW: SCSI DRIVES

For an extra $100, you can get Mirror Technologies' MagNet 20X bundled with Infosphere's MacServe disk server. If purchased separately, MacServe is a $250 package. The MagNet 20X depends on the capabilities of MacServe for backup programs and print spooling. Both the ProAPP 20 and the MagNet 20X have external power supplies.

Software

The software included with these drives is where the differences in the drives really show (see table 1). This set is not all-inclusive; we included only what we considered to be relevant to this review.

Many of the drives include a head parker, which moves the disk drive read/write head to an unused sector on the platter. The heads should always be parked before you move or ship a drive; this gives added protection to files when you shut off the drive.

The Imagewriter spooler on the DataFrame 20 is superior to that on the HyperDrive FX/20. The DataFrame 20's Imagewriter print spooler, SuperSpool, is accessible from a desk accessory, which allows you to view the status of your print jobs or delete and reorder individual jobs in the print queue. The HyperDrive FX/20's Imagewriter print spooler is accessible only from the desktop; you must leave your application to get to it. While you can view each job, you cannot alter the job's order, and the only way to delete a job is to flush the whole queue. The MagNet 20X's Imagewriter spooler is part of the MacServe package bundled with that drive.

All the drives except for the LoDown 20 and Peripheral Land's PL20 have some sort of backup utility. We found those included with the DataFrame 20 and the HyperDrive FX/20 easy to use. They both have incremental, individual-file, and volume backup. They also worked only with these drives. The ProAPP 20 has a very good backup utility, Quickbackup, which is licensed for ProAPP 20 users only. Relax Technology's Hard 20 Plus comes with a shareware backup program, HardSave version 1.1; you must send the author at least $20 if you decide to keep it and use it. HardSave 1.1 can back up an entire volume or individual files and folders and then save the output of the backup program to a file. Peak Systems' Plus-20 comes with a backup program called Archiver that, according to a message on the program, is provided free by the author. We couldn't get Archiver to work, and the program has no help screens. The Big Mack Twinpack, being an integrated drive and tape-backup unit, does not need a backup-to-floppy program. The MagNet 20X's backup utility is part of MacServe.

The HyperDrive FX/20 is the only drive of this group that comes with a LaserWriter spooler. The program, LaserSpooler, consists of a printer resource that creates the PostScript file and a desk accessory that spoons these files to the printer and shows you the printer's status. It took 23 seconds to spool out the 12,620-byte file, Release Notes version 1.00, included with the HyperDrive FX/20. Checking the print queue gives only the job that is currently printing. Unfortunately, Aldus PageMaker documents will not spool with LaserSpooler; these documents simply print as if LaserSpooler were not installed.

Both the HyperDrive FX/20 and the Big Mack Twinpack have a file-encryption utility. The program included with the HyperDrive FX/20 is explained thoroughly in the user's manual and is easy to use. The utility included with the Big Mack Twinpack is not mentioned in the user's manual, and we noticed it only when looking at the desk accessories.

The final entries in table 1 give the physical characteristics of the SCSI hard disks. The footprint is the amount of desk area taken up by the drive; this is less significant with those disks that are placed underneath the Macintosh. The ability to be placed underneath the Mac is indi-

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PL20</th>
<th>MagNet 20X</th>
<th>LoDown 20</th>
<th>Plus-20</th>
<th>Hard Disk 20 (Non-SCSI for comparison)</th>
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Continued
REVIEW: SCSI DRIVES

Benchmarking SCSI Drives

Table 1 shows the results of the benchmark tests we ran and some of the distinguishing characteristics of each drive, such as software included and footprint size. The main set of tests was written in Microsoft BASIC version 1.0, and the tests were run on a Macintosh Plus with 2 megabytes of memory and one 800K-byte internal floppy disk. To decrease the variables in the tests, we formatted each SCSI drive with the low-level format provided with it and put only the amount of data on the drive that was required to run the benchmarks. This consisted of the System 3.2, Finder 5.2, the Mac's disk cache and did not move the mouse during the test. For comparison, the four BASIC programs (LineWrite, LineRead, FragWrite, and FragRead), MacWrite file was timed from the double click on its icon to the appearance of the I-beam cursor. The LineWrite program writes a single linear 512K-byte file to the disk, while LineRead reads the same file back.

Fragmentation

To understand the purpose of FragWrite and FragRead, we must explain the notion of file fragmentation. Ideally, the system software for a hard disk will write all the bytes for a file in one long sequence. This minimizes the amount of movement that the read/write head must go through to reach the information on the disk surface. Since head motion is one of the major factors in determining a hard disk's speed, this ideal case produces the fastest times for the hard disk.

Unfortunately, most hard disks in the real world don’t work so well. Every time you delete a file, you create an empty spot in the hard disk where that file had been stored. Later, when you create a new file, some of that file might be placed in the gap left by the earlier file. As more files are deleted and added, more gaps are created and filled. After a while, the disk surface is pockmarked with hundreds of little gaps left over from all this activity. New files fill these gaps and are thereby scattered all over the surface of the disk. Retrieving fragmented files is slower than retrieving linear files because the head must move over a larger area of the disk to get to the information. Most simple benchmarks of hard disks never address this common problem because the reviewer normally works with a brand-new disk drive that has not been pockmarked with heavy use.

To simulate the effect of fragmentation, the FragWrite test creates deliberately fragmented files. The technique was to write sixteen 2K-byte files and then append 13 more 2K-byte chunks onto these 16 files in interleaved sequence. FragRead reads these fragmented files.

Which Should You Buy?

Most of these hard disks perform similarly in the benchmark tests. The stability and ease of use of the software bundled with them varies greatly. We found the Dataframe 20’s software easiest to use, with the HyperDrive FX/20’s running a close second. The PL20, Plus-20, LoDown 20, and Hard 20 Plus are all roughly comparable. Western Computer’s Big Mack Twinpack would be a good choice if ease of making backups is important, but Western Computer needs to provide better system software and support. The MagNet 20X and the ProAPP 20 work well enough, but their external power supplies are just one more thing to find room for on your desk or floor.

If you are interested in using the hard disk as a file server, then getting MacServe bundled with the drive would be attractive. The ProAPP 20 would be good for people who have both a Macintosh and an Apple II.

Products Mentioned

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<td>Dataframe 20, Dataframe XP 20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mountain View, CA 94043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>HyperDrive FX/20</td>
<td>General Computer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>215 First St. Cambridge, MA 02142</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Hard 20 Plus</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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[Editor’s note: By press time, many of the SCSI hard drive companies told us they had made changes to either their hardware or software. Relax Technology said its Hard 20 Plus now has the ability to change the SCSI address in software. Peak Systems has made the SCSI jumpers on its Plus-20 accessible outside the case as DIP switches, and it has also added an Imagewriter print spooler. The LoDown 20 now has a head-parking utility, and the MagNet 20X now has a fan and a head-parker. Peripheral Land’s PL20 now has a backup-to-floppy utility.]
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BASIC Compilers for the Macintosh

Scott L. Norman

Three packages
from Addison-Wesley, Zedcor, and Pterodactyl Software

BASIC Compilers

Addison-Wesley's True BASIC 1.0 ($99.95), Zedcor's ZBasic 3.01 ($89.95), and Pterodactyl Software's PCMacBasic 1.65 ($39.95) enable you to produce programs that capitalize on the familiar Macintosh interface.

Each compiler has its strong and weak points, as well as a distinctive feel. These programs also follow different design philosophies. True BASIC and ZBasic come in several versions for different computers, while PCMacBasic is a more specialized Macintosh-only product intended to be highly compatible with the IBM PC's BASICA dialect at the source code level. The degree to which the development cycle intrudes on the creative process varies among the three.

True BASIC

True BASIC bears the cachet of John G. Kemeny and Thomas E. Kurtz, two of the major forces behind the development of the original BASIC. Kemeny and Kurtz have been forceful advocates for their version of the language, energetically opposing the spread of a dialect of BASIC they call "Street BASIC."

True BASIC is a structured language that encourages you to adopt a convenient, modular programming style. It offers several types of decision-making constructs, some interesting facilities for handling arrays and doing matrix arithmetic, and some extremely handy features for manipulating graphics. It is also supported by site licensing and, in the Macintosh version, additional libraries for sorts, searches, three-dimensional graphics, and communications. Unfortunately, True BASIC does not generate stand-alone applications by itself; its Compile option generates tokenized versions of the source code that requires True BASIC to run. You need the runtime package, which is available separately for $150, to generate stand-alone programs.

You can divide the True BASIC screen into separate windows for command entry, source code editing, and program output. You can also shape the output window to leave the code visible while a program runs, or you can use the default full-screen window. A nonstandard Control Box at the left edge of the screen includes icons for opening and closing the command and output windows, and it has a unique "traffic light" symbol that lets you start, stop, or interrupt programs by clicking on one of the lights. You can also handle these control functions via a conventional Run menu with command-key options.

The editor is similar to other Macintosh text editors except for its ability to select a block of lines according to either line numbers or ordinal positions in the code. There is also an Include feature that is handy for importing library source code into a new program. The editor also supports the numeric keypad of the Macintosh Plus.

A Format menu contains commands to number or unnumber your source code, and it can also put keywords into all-caps format or indent the interior statements of loops. It does not generally capitalize the second keyword in a construct like DO UNTIL, however. The editor seems to be forgiving of mixing uppercase and lowercase text, but it does not tolerate the omission of spaces. For example, terminating a loop with NEXT j instead of NEXT j constitutes an error.

Line numbers are not necessary in True BASIC, and, in fact, they are not even mentioned in the user's guide. However, you cannot refer to blocks of ordinary code (as distinguished from subroutines) by labels, so you will need line numbers if you use GOSUB or GOTO to control program flow.

In normal operation, True BASIC simulates the interactive nature of a BASIC interpreter by recompiling the source code each time you give the RUN command. The compiler is fairly fast; it compiled the benchmark programs in well under 1 second, and you get the impression of quick feedback when debugging a new program. You might be reluctant to go through the process with a long, thoroughly tested routine, however. It is possible to save your tokenized code and subsequently execute it instead.

Syntax and Features

True BASIC's code should look familiar to anyone who learned programming with Microsoft BASIC. This is because Kemeny and Kurtz didn't start from scratch. They did make some changes in the syntax, however. One change that is not likable is that the keyword LET is mandatory in assignment statements (e.g., LET x = 1), just as it was in the earliest BASICS. Also, you cannot have multiple statements in one program line (comments excepted), and each of the alternatives in a multibranch decision-making structure must be written on its own line. That, at least, makes for clarity.

To allow for repeated calculations, True BASIC adds DO UNTIL . . . LOOP UNTIL and DO WHILE . . . LOOP WHILE statement pairs to the familiar FOR . . . NEXT construct. In addition, a flexible Pascal-like SELECT CASE statement directs program flow among discrete alternatives. For example:

SELECT CASE character
  case "0" to "9"
    call process_number_digit
  case "A" to "F"
continued

Scott L. Norman (8 Doris Rd., Framingham, MA 01701) works at the GTE Laboratories in Waltham, MA. He has a Ph.D. in physics from the University of Chicago.
allows your program to handle numeric input in a reasonable fashion without a large amount of code.

An improved DIM statement lets you adjust the bounds on an array’s subscripts to suit the particular problem; for example, DIM expenses(1980 to 1986) sets up an array named “expenses” whose elements can be instantly identified by year. True BASIC supports the series of MAT commands that let you read, print, add, subtract, and multiply arrays. Arrays can have up to 255 dimensions on a 512K-byte Macintosh. The accuracy of variables is 14 digits, and it is 10 digits for transcendental numbers.

Graphics and ROM Support
True BASIC allows you to define the screen boundaries to any value you like rather than using a fixed coordinate system. You use the SET WINDOW command to specify the range of values (say, dollars and years) that you would like the screen dimensions to represent for a particular problem. For example, you can plot sales figures by typing the statement SET WINDOW 1980, 1986, 1000, 10000. This eliminates writing an algorithm for translating these values to screen coordinates.

True BASIC introduces the concept of a “picture,” the graphic equivalent of a subroutine. Pictures add flexibility to True BASIC graphics, but they are not Macintosh QuickDraw routines. You can store pictures in libraries, which are called with a DRAW statement, and you can geometrically transform them. Built-in transformation functions are available for shifting, scaling, and rotating picture data. These routines work on all computers that support True BASIC.

To make use of special Macintosh ROM features (e.g., the Menu Manager, Dialog Manager, Event Manager, and QuickDraw), you need the 13 libraries on the True BASIC Toolbox disk. A document called “Read Me (512K)” explains the process briefly, but, to use them effectively, you need a copy of Inside Macintosh or some other detailed treatment of the Mac’s ROMs. All three compilers that I tested required this document.

Many of these libraries are concerned with I/O and actually conflict with the generic syntax of True BASIC. For example, you can use Macintosh windows and menus for I/O, or you can stick to True BASIC’s INPUT and PRINT statements; you cannot mix the two. However, you can use ROM QuickDraw graphics routines along with True BASIC graphics commands. True BASIC includes its own commands for reading the mouse position and button status, allowing you to supply nontextual input to a program.

The True BASIC package comes with a 310-page user’s guide and a 331-page reference manual. The former could serve as a step-by-step introduction to BASIC for the novice; it also contains material specific to the Macintosh. The reference manual is machine-independend and delves more deeply into issues of syntax. One result of this approach is that little information about disk files is in the reference manual, and the information in the user’s guide is buried in an appendix. Each book has an index that covers both books, but the boldfaced page entries aren’t the first place that a given topic appears, nor the major entry. Instead, the bold entries indicate that the information is located in the reference manual, and plain entries are in the user’s guide. This is initially confusing.

[Editor’s note: True BASIC is now in version 1.2; this version supports the Mac Plus’s 128K-byte ROMs.]

ZBasic
Like True BASIC, Zedcor’s ZBasic is available in different versions for a number of computers. Zedcor’s philosophy is to maintain the highest possible degree of source code portability, which means that device-independent file and graphics functions are included. At the same time, the syntax has been modified to optimize the compiler’s performance. The result is a few syntactic oddities, and the Reference Manual’s scheme is a little unusual. [Editor’s note: For details on the IBM PC version of ZBasic, see T1 Byers’s review of ZBasic in the May 1986 BYTE.] On the positive side, if you’re a technically inclined user, ZBasic offers some exciting possibilities for extended-precision arithmetic.

The Macintosh version of the language has two editors: the ZBasic line editor, which has a window that you must use to enter direct commands, and Edit, a conventional stand-alone Macintosh editor.

The ZBasic line editor is the core of what Zedcor calls its interactive programming environment. It has an annoying characteristic: It will not rewrite text that is temporarily covered by, say, a dialog box. To assist in program development, a Minicomplier feature enables you to interactively test single lines of code just as an interpreter would. These lines cannot start with an E or an L because those letters would be interpreted as the EDIT and LIST commands of the line editor.

The language is case-sensitive and requires line numbers for editing, merging, and appending programs. You can also refer to lines with labels to control program flow. You can’t use ZBasic keywords anywhere within the names of variables unless you enter the names in lowercase and have not instructed the compiler to convert everything to uppercase. A Configure window lets you specify this conversion and other attributes.

After writing your source code, you can compile what is in memory and run it in one step with the RUN command or its command-key equivalent. Families of commands are available for compiling and running a source file previously saved on disk and for compiling from disk and saving the object code so that you do not have to recompile for every run. For example, RUN * filename compiles a disk source file and saves the result back to disk under the same name.

Once you have saved object code with RUN* filename, that program becomes a stand-alone application. To run it, you leave ZBasic and double-click the program’s icon. At this point, you no longer need ZBasic itself. You can go even further and create programs that have their own icons (the RMarker resource compiler utility needed for this comes with the package) or create programs that open automatically when you double-click on any associated data file.

ZBasic allows you to chain or link programs together by using shared or independent variables through a family of LOAD, MERGE, and APPEND commands. The LONG FN command allows you to write multiline function definitions that are terminated by END FN. Subroutine names are terminated by a numbered source code (using SAVE +) so that you can insert them at any desired point of a calling program.

Major Features
Many other aspects of ZBasic’s operation will be familiar to experienced BASIC users. Looping structures include FOR . . . NEXT, WHILE . . . WEND, DO . . . UNTIL, and LONGIF . . . ENDIF. A good assortment of branching commands is included, but there is no SELECT CASE selection statement, as in True BASIC.

ZBasic arrays can have up to three dimensions. The user’s manual describes the storage requirements for the digits of accuracy for variables (4 bytes of memory for 6 digits of single-precision accuracy per variable, 8 bytes for 14 digits of double-precision accuracy per variable, and a user-configurable accuracy on the Macintosh for up to 240 digits). You can configure ZBasic for greater or lesser math precision depending on whether...
your requirements are execution speed or accuracy, and the manual describes the trade-offs. This isn't the sort of information you need every day, but it comes in handy if you're attempting to optimize the performance of your BASIC program.

If you plan to use extensive calculations in your application, you should know that the Macintosh version of ZBasic features enhanced numerical ranges—up to 240 digits of accuracy, as mentioned earlier. For double-precision floating-point calculations (e.g., 9.99153 to 9.991834). The defaults are 12 digits for double precision, 6 digits for single precision, and 8 digits for scientific precision. Both 2-byte and 4-byte integers are supported, and integer arithmetic is assumed as the default unless the compiler is configured otherwise.

The manual states that the execution speed is the same for single- and double-precision calculations, which is contrary to my experience with the BYTE Floating-Point benchmark (see table 1). I used the Reconfigure ZBasic option under the Configure menu to set the default variables to single or double precision when I ran this benchmark, and the double-precision computations ran significantly faster.

In addition to ZBasic's device-independent graphics described in TJ Byers's review, the Macintosh version has special enhancements: All MacPaint's patterns are available for filling in figures or for the pen, although the numbering scheme shown in the documentation is incorrect. The pattern identification actually run from 0 to 37 rather than from 1 to 38 as indicated.

ZBasic's graphics commands will generally be familiar to users of Microsoft BASIC, but oddities such as the use of "brads" (which run from 0 to 255) to measure angles in the CIRCLE command exist. Also, simply plunging ahead with ZBasic graphics will generate elliptical circles: a RATIO command is required to set things right.

One of ZBasic's graphics commands is less versatile than Microsoft BASIC's: You may have to repeat the FILL command with different starting points if you want to fill in the background around a complex object. This is because the algorithm for area-filling starts from the uppermost point in the region and fills from left to right as it works downward. It's possible that this method might miss certain areas in the region, requiring additional calls to FILL. The GET and PUT commands for doing animation by copying, erasing, and redrawing regions of the screen do not appear in conventional ZBasic, but they are available in the Macintosh version.

ZBasic does a good job of invoking pull-down menus and dialog boxes. ROM Toolbox functions and procedures are supported, but Inside Macintosh or a similar reference is a necessity.

The latest version of the ZBasic user's manual consists of 227 pages of tutorial material, a 170-page reference section, four appendices for various operating systems, a reference card, and the unavoidable errata sheets. The Macintosh appendix is 115 pages long. The whole thing is reasonably well-written, but, as with the True BASIC documentation, it can be a little wearisome for the beginner to flip back and forth between general-reference material and Macintosh-specific information.

[Editor's note: ZBasic is now in version 3.03. It features faster printing, and it supports 20 new Macintosh Toolbox calls.]

PCMacBasic
A Macintosh compiler designed for maximum syntactic compatibility with the IBM PC's BASICA is something of an oddity. You'll probably be more interested in PCMacBasic's ability to use Macintosh resource files—files that enable you to customize icons, windows, menus, dialog boxes, character fonts, and other attributes of the Macintosh display. PCMacBasic can, in principle, produce the most thoroughly Mac-like programs of the three BASICS described here, but at a price. The package is not simple to use, and, to get the most from it, you should have either Apple's Macintosh Development System (MDS) or Signature Software System's McAssembly assembler and linker.

No special multiple-window program...
Programming environment is available in PCMacBasic. It most resembles the conventional development environment in that you use an editor to write the source code, use the compiler to generate object code, and then attempt to run the program. You can use any text editor to create the code for the two input files the compiler needs: the BASIC source program and the associated resource file.

From these files, PCMacBasic can create a stand-alone program. The compiler can also produce an assembler source file in MDS or MCAssembly format, should you want to hand-tune the assembler.

PCMacBasic has a built-in resource compiler, and the documentation contains a certain amount of information on the syntax of resources. A couple of demonstration files are on the disk, but not enough for the novice. To learn about resource files, you are referred to the ubiquitous Inside Macintosh. You are also referred to the IBM BASICA manual if you want more than the sketchy information on BASICA commands that is included in an appendix entitled “The Rest of the Statements.”

PCMacBasic can compile large (100K-byte) programs, but you must break them into segments, each less than 32K bytes long. You can chain segments together in the source code so that one will call another, and you can pass variables between them by using the COMMON identifier.

The compiler is case-insensitive. Line numbers are optional, and, as in FORTRAN, they do not have to appear in numerical order when you use them. Each program segment must begin with a line number, however, and you can refer to lines only by number—not by label.

Some Syntax Features
PCMacBasic has 13 mouse-sensing commands that you can use to write the editing portion of an application program. The BASIC program can detect single, double, and triple clicks with a single MOUSE(0) function call.

Other MOUSE calls return the starting, ending, and current locations of the mouse. These points are available both as graphic coordinates and as the nearest text-line and column location. PCMacBasic handles all mouse activity for the system, menus, dialog boxes, and scroll bars. You can take care of clicks only within the main windows.

There are no restrictions on the number of program segments, each of which may be as large as the memory will allow. They may be chained together to make a single, large program that runs from disk.

Table 1: Results from the standard BYTE benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Microsoft BASIC 2.1(b)</th>
<th>True Basic 1.0*</th>
<th>ZBasic 3.01</th>
<th>PCMacBasic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sieve</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write</td>
<td>15 Internal 20-megabyte HyperDrive used, normal mode.</td>
<td>6 Internal 20-megabyte HyperDrive used, binary mode.</td>
<td>3 Internal 20-megabyte HyperDrive used, binary mode.</td>
<td>6 Internal 20-megabyte HyperDrive used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21 400K-byte blank floppy disk, normal mode; 65,535-byte file output.</td>
<td>12 400K-byte blank floppy disk, normal mode; 66,048-byte file output.</td>
<td>18 400K-byte floppy disk, binary mode, 65,535-byte file output.</td>
<td>15 400K-byte floppy disk, normal mode; 66,048-byte file output.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>14 Internal 20-megabyte HyperDrive used, normal mode.</td>
<td>5 Internal 20-megabyte HyperDrive used, binary mode.</td>
<td>2 Internal 20-megabyte HyperDrive used, binary mode.</td>
<td>7 Internal 20-megabyte HyperDrive used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 400K-byte blank floppy disk, normal mode; 66,048-byte file read.</td>
<td>10 400K-byte blank floppy disk, normal mode; 66,048-byte file read.</td>
<td>58 400K-byte floppy disk, normal mode; 66,048-byte file read.</td>
<td>12 400K-byte floppy disk, normal mode; 66,048-byte file read.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* True BASIC’s run-time package was not available; all benchmarks were run in interpreter mode.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Description</th>
<th>IBM PC</th>
<th>IBM AT</th>
<th>BREAKTHRU 286</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clock speed in MHz (IBM PC is 4.77)</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty Loop</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>5.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integer add from memory</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>6.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integer multiply from memory</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floating point without coprocessor</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime number test</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotus 123 macro (640K)</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotus 123 macro (256K)</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norton System Information Test</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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ARRAYS ARE DYNAMIC, AND YOU CAN ERASE AND RE-CREATE THEM IN A DIFFERENT SIZE WHILE A PROGRAM IS RUNNING. AN ARRAY CAN'T USE MORE THAN 32,766 BYTES. THE OPTION BASE STATEMENT CAN DESIGNATE ANY INTEGER, NOT JUST 0 OR 1, FOR THE LOWEST SUBSCRIPT IN AN ARRAY. YOU CAN USE SPECIAL ERASE AND FRE("") COMMANDS WITHIN A PROGRAM TO FULLY RECOVER THE SPACE TAKEN BY UNUSED ARRAYS.

SINGLE- AND DOUBLE-PRECISION NUMBERS ARE IN APPLE'S SANE FORMAT (USING 4 OR 8 BYTES, RESPECTIVELY). HEXADECIMAL AND OCTAL CONSTANTS ARE LIMITED TO 16-BIT INTEGERS.

AS MENTIONED EARLIER, PCMACBASIC HAS EXTENSIVE FACILITIES FOR SETTING UP MENU SYSTEMS. IN THE SAME WAY, IT ALLOWS YOU TO DEFINE FUNCTION KEYS, THE COMMAND-KEYSTROKE EQUIVALENTS OF ITEMS ON A SPECIAL FUNCTION MENU. I FOUND THAT THE SIMPLEST WAY TO SET UP THE BYTE BENCHMARK PROGRAMS WAS TO USE ONE OF THE SAMPLE PROGRAMS AS A TEMPLATE. I ASSIGNED EACH BENCHMARK ROUTINE TO A FUNCTION KEY AND THEN SIMPLY INSERTED ITS CODE AT THE DESIGNATED SPOT IN THE SAMPLE PROGRAM OUTLINE. THE ASSOCIATED SAMPLE RESOURCE FILE HANDLED THE ACTUAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FUNCTION MENU.

GRAPHICS ARE AVAILABLE IN EITHER THE MEDIUM RESOLUTION (40-CHARACTER-WIDE) OR HIGH RESOLUTION (80-CHARACTER-WIDE) SCREEN MODES, WHICH MUST FIRST BE SPECIFIED WITH A SCREEN COMMAND. THIS IS A FAMILIAR REQUIREMENT TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE USED MICROSOFT BASIC ON OTHER COMPUTERS, BUT IT IS UNUSUAL FOR THE MACINTOSH. UNFORTUNATELY, YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH SOME CALCULATIONS TO GET FROM BASIC COORDINATES TO SCREEN COORDINATES.

GENERALIZED CIRCLE AND LINE STATEMENTS ARE AVAILABLE, WHICH HAVE THE USUAL OPTIONS FOR DRAWING ELLIPSES, ARCS, AND BOXES. THE PHOTOCOPIED USER'S MANUAL (WHICH IS 162 PAGES LONG, INCLUDING APPENDICES) DOES NOT DEVOTE A GREAT DEAL OF EMPHASIS TO GRAPHICS, BUT IT DOES DESCRIBE HOW TO CALL QUICKDRAW ROUTINES.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: PCMACBASIC'S LATEST VERSION IS 1.96. THIS VERSION PROVIDES HIERARCHICAL FILE SYSTEM COMPATIBILITY, AND IT ENABLES YOU TO COMPILE ONE PROGRAM AND THEN LINK IN OTHER MODULES. A NEW SPIRAL-BOUND USER'S MANUAL IS ALSO INCLUDED.]

OBSERVATIONS

FOR THE COMPLETE BENCHMARK RESULTS, SEE TABLE 1. I USED A 512K-BYTE MACINTOSH EQUIPPED WITH AN INTERNAL 20-MEGABYTE HYPERDRIVE FOR THE TESTS. SINCE I DIDN'T HAVE THE RUN-TIME PACKAGE FOR TRUE BASIC, I RAN ALL THE TRUE BASIC BENCHMARKS USING TRUE BASIC AS AN INTERPRETER. [EDITOR'S NOTE: MICROSOFT BASIC INTERPRETER BENCHMARKS ARE PROVIDED FOR COMPARISON. ALSO, DISK I/O BENCHMARK TIMES FOR 400K-BYTE FLOPPY DISKS ARE PROVIDED. THE FILE I/O BENCHMARKS VARIED CONSIDERABLY DEPENDING ON THE I/O MODE BEING USED. FOR EXAMPLE, ZBASIC DIDN'T FARE WELL USING PRINT AND INPUT STATEMENTS, BUT IT DID CONSIDERABLY BETTER USING WRITE AND READ STATEMENTS FOR BINARY FILE I/O. THIS ALSO AFFECTED THE SIZE OF THE BENCHMARK FILE, SINCE EACH BASIC ADDS A CARRIAGE RETURN TO THE END OF A STRING OUTPUT BY A PRINT STATEMENT. SEE TABLE 1 FOR THE FILE SIZES GENERATED.]

I HAVE DISCUSSED THESE PRODUCTS IN ORDER OF INCREASING DIFFICULTY OF USE, AT LEAST FOR ME. TRUE BASIC'S OPERATION AND DOCUMENTATION HAVE A PROFESSIONAL LOOK, AND, ALTHOUGH I MIGHT QUibble WITH SOME OF ITS SYNTACTIC RIGIDITY, I FIND IT EASIEST OF THE THREE TO USE FOR ONE OF MY MOST COMMON JOBS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF FAIRLY SHORT PROGRAMS THAT END BY PUTTING A FINANCIAL OR TECHNICAL GRAPH ON THE SCREEN. I FIND TRUE BASIC'S USER-DEFINED COORDINATE SYSTEM A TERRIFIC CONVENIENCE.

ZBASIC IS MORE OF A CHORE TO UNLIMIT FOR SIMPLE APPLICATIONS, BUT I HAVE OTHER THINGS IN MIND FOR IT. MY PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS INCLUDE THE MATHEMATICAL MODELING OF PHYSICAL SYSTEMS, FOR WHICH I GENERALLY USE MAINFRAME-STYLE FORTRAN. I AM THEREFORE VERY INTRIGUED BY THE NUMERICAL PRECISION THAT ZBASIC CLAIMS, ALTHOUGH I AM NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT ITS SPEED, A JUDGMENT BASED ON THE FLOATING-POINT BENCHMARKS. STILL, I HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF TURNING IT LOOSE ON SOME SIZABLE PROBLEMS IN HEAT-TRANSFER AND SEMICONDUCTOR-DEVICE MODELING.

AND HOW WOULD I ASSESS PCMACBASIC? I GUESS I MUST BE A GRAPHICS-ORIENTED MACINTOSH ADVOCATE, BECAUSE I CAN'T SEE THE SENSE OF USING PC-STYLE GRAPHICS ON THE MACINTOSH. ALTHOUGH PCMACBASIC HAS A GREAT DEAL OF FLEXIBILITY BY VIRTUE OF ITS ABILITY TO USE RESOURCE FILES, I HAD TROUBLE JUSTIFYING THIS POWER WITH THE LANGUAGE'S IBM PC EMPHASIS. THE MANUAL MAKES NO PRETENSE OF CATERING TO THE NOVICE. AS A RESULT, I OFTEN FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHETHER I WAS EXPECTING TOO MUCH FROM THE SYSTEM OR TOO LITTLE.
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Q&A version 2.0 from Symantec is primarily a flat-file manager for the IBM PC and compatibles. Its File and Report modules are modeled after the original PFS:File program from Software Publishing. Although the Q&A modules retain the familiar interface of that program, they also add a host of sort, format, and search features.

But Q&A is more than a flat-file manager. It also contains a word processor called Write that is complete enough to be a worthwhile product on its own. You can use the word processor’s features with the File module to create forms, but you can also use it for writing memos, letters, and other documents. A Merge facility in Q&A lets you incorporate information from the data files into Write documents.

Both the database and word processor in Q&A are supported by export and import functions grouped under the “utilities” heading in Q&A’s main menu. Other utilities concern printer installation and DOS functions such as listing file names and renaming, copying, or deleting files. A macro facility is available at all times within Q&A; you can use it to capture a series of Q&A commands or to simplify the repetitive input of a long text string during word processing or data entry.

Finally, Symantec beefs up this $349 package with a natural-language front end called the Intelligent Assistant. The IA can analyze a wide range of questions posed in everyday English phrases to directly manipulate the database or to generate reports.

Memory Hungry
Q&A eats up a lot of memory. The program requires a minimum of 512K bytes of RAM, and 640K bytes is recommended. When you use Q&A with the IA, work with a large database, or do reports with multiple sort levels, you’ll need the maximum amount of memory. For simple databases, writing, or report generating, 512K bytes will suffice. This demand for memory led Symantec to offer inexpensive ($50) 256K-byte RAM add-on boards to Q&A buyers (through its Turner Hall Publishing subsidiary).

Q&A’s hunger for memory doesn’t end with RAM: The program comes on six 5¼-inch floppy disks (three disks if you use 3½-inch floppies) comprised of a Startup disk, a File/Report/Utilities disk, the IA disk, a Write/Proof disk, a Tutorial disk, and a Samples disk. Although a couple of these disks come into play only during initial installation, you still need the other four during regular use of Q&A. That leads to a lot of disk shuffling: each of the major components—Write, File, and the IA—are on separate disks. The program prompts you for disk changes but, for efficiency’s sake, you’d best use a computer equipped with a hard disk, even if you use 3½-inch floppies.

Welcome Changes
Version 2.0 of Q&A has quite a few changes from earlier versions. [Editor’s note: See the Product Preview of version 1.0 by Jon R. Edwards in the January 1986 BYTE.] These changes include an improvement in the speed of the IA, inclusion of a database-recovery utility for slightly damaged databases, tighter integration with Lotus 1-2-3, improved macros and programming, more formatting options for reports, networking support in the form of file-locking, and international versions (French, German, and Dutch versions are currently available). The database-recovery tool is particularly welcome because Q&A databases, like other databases, can be damaged when the program is interrupted by a power loss or by a reboot from any point other than a Q&A menu. Q&A has several features that tailor it to work closely with Lotus 1-2-3. First, you can install 1-2-3 as one of Q&A’s main menu choices. That means you can run 1-2-3 directly from Q&A almost as if it were another module. You can also import 1-2-3 worksheets directly into either Write or File and include 1-2-3 graphs in the printed version of Write documents.

Version 2.0 of Q&A can read database files from Q&A 1.0 and 1.1 and put them into 2.0’s format, but versions 1.0 and 1.1 cannot use 2.0 files. The user’s manual says that 2.0 can use macro files created with 1.0 or 1.1, but changes to some of the menus and the additional use of function keys “may make some macros behave differently.” In other words, you’d better write new macros.

I tested Q&A on an IBM PC with 512K bytes of RAM and two 5¼-inch floppy disk drives. Although I did not test Q&A on a network, the user’s manual says that the program is compatible with all major LANs that support DOS 3.1 or higher including 3+ from 3Com, NetWare from Novell, and IBM’s PC Network and Token-Ring Network. Two people cannot run the same copy of Q&A at the same time on a LAN, but they can share the database. Q&A has file locking, so when one person is using the database, others are locked out.

The Write Module
I wrote this review with the Write word processor. Like the other modules of the program, Write loads slowly. You do most of the editing on the 21 lines of the simple editing display using function-key commands (or WordStar cursor commands, if you prefer). Across the bottom
Q&A version 2.0

Type
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Cupertino, CA 95014
(408) 253-9600

Format
Six 5½-inch disks or three 3½-inch disks

Computer
IBM PC or compatible with two disk drives and a minimum of 512K bytes of RAM (640K bytes recommended) running DCS 2.0 or higher

Language
C

Documentation
648-page user's manual; quick-reference guide; quick-reference card

Price
$349; optional thesaurus program: $50. If you bought Q&A version 1.0 or 1.1 after September 14, 1986, a free upgrade to version 2.0 is available. All registered owners of 1.0 and 1.1 who bought Q&A before this date can purchase an upgrade to 2.0 for $50.

There you specify each field you want to sort, its sort priority (up to 512 levels), and its sort direction (ascending or descending). Q&A shows you how many records it has searched and sorted as it performs the task. If you want to view more information at once, select the Table View of Forms option to see 17 records stacked vertically with the first five fields laid out horizontally across the screen. You can use another option to change the fields that appear on the table. To change information in a form, you simply retrieve the form, type the new information, and then save the form.

You can print individual forms and mailing labels without going to the Report module. To modify a Q&A database, you change the design, labels, information types, field lengths, and other aspects. If your new field won’t accommodate the old information, Q&A will warn you before truncating the information. You can customize databases by selecting the display colors, shading, and underlining; by setting up custom help screens, including programming statements to save keystrokes; setting automatic initial values; and restricting values to prevent data entry mistakes.

To test the speed of Q&A's database, I ran benchmarks on a file of 500 records with 11 fields. Using nonindexed fields, Q&A was able to sort the file in ascending order in 44.9 seconds, and it found the last record in 19.7 seconds. Q&A lets you create index fields to speed up searches. You can have as many as 115 index fields (or "speedy fields," as the manual calls them). But using a large number of index fields will add to the file index and could become a disadvantage by occupying too much disk space.

The programming statements in forms can calculate field values, look up values in tables, figure dates, or move the cursor on the form. The calculations can include a variety of operators, IF...THEN statements, and other logical constructs. You enter the program statements on a Program Spec version of the form. The program is executed—either manually or automatically—when you add or update a form.

The Mass Update option lets you change information in all forms within a group at one time. You can perform mass updates with direct input of new information or through calculated values. The Utilities disk has options for importing data from PFS:File, IBM Writing Assistant, Lotus 1-2-3, Symphony, DIF, ASCII, dBASE II, and dBASE III files. You can export files in DIF or ASCII formats.
The Intelligent Assistant

When you invoke the Intelligent Assistant from the main menu, you get a natural-language interface to the File and Report modules. After you type a request, the IA software itself takes your request, breaks it down into pieces, and tries to analyze it in terms of its built-in 400-word vocabulary, the labels of the particular database, and whatever words you have taught it. When the IA thinks it understands your question or request, it will tell you what it thinks you want done and ask for confirmation.

From the beginning, the IA works great for simple requests. You can watch the program's analysis progress as a highlighting bar forges its way through your request. Requests such as "show everybody who got a bonus" will cause the IA to dredge File and Report to retrieve the right forms and display them on the screen. You can use the IA to add, retrieve, change, or delete forms and to create reports.

A section of the user's manual explains what types of words confuse the IA and how to best talk to it. If the IA tells you that it doesn't know a word, it will give you a chance to explain. If it warns you that its understanding isn't completely clear, it will give you a chance to end the analysis.

To teach the IA, you type new words that can act as synonyms for words the IA already knows. The number of words you can teach it is limited only by disk space. In time, this ability to customize the IA greatly speeds its analysis of complex requests. You will find it responding promptly to requests such as "Give me a list of all the western managers who are making more than $30,000 but didn't earn a bonus last year." This is exactly what most beginners expect to be able to do with a computer, and it is a massive step forward from the A > prompt. For computer enthusiasts, the IA alone is reason enough to buy Q&A. For business use, a trained IA can insulate a manager from Spec Forms and the like, and it can make a database less frightening and more likely to be used.

Integration a Key

Q&A offers just about everything you could want in a flat-filer. It is easy to learn because of the clear user's manual and the lucid on-disk tutorial, and it is easy to use because of its standard interfaces and commands and on-line help. Conforming to such standards for the interface while expanding the range of database features behind that interface makes for a program that takes advantage of the user's previous training and yet is capable of handling many tasks.

Making the word processor more than just a notepad places Q&A outside the realm of file managers. For many small businesses, Q&A offers a tightly integrated tool for handling the three major office tasks: letter writing, information organizing, and report generating.

Other programs offer the possibility of customization through macros. Q&A has a fine macro facility, but it goes far beyond that level of customization with the IA. Although it is clumsy and slow to use at first, as you learn its habits and vocabulary and it learns yours, you'll soon wonder why all other application programs don't have a similar facility.

The two major drawbacks to Q&A are its lack of relational facilities and its voracious memory demands, which preclude use of one or more memory-resident programs on 512K-byte systems. In addition, although hard disks are becoming standard equipment on PCs, quite a few machines still have just two floppy disk drives. The need for disk-swapping, the slow loading of new modules, and the practical exclusion of memory-resident tools may be too much of a sacrifice for many users.

Still, for anyone who needs a file manager, who could benefit from having a word processor right at hand, and who wants the help of an Intelligent Assistant, Q&A is hard to beat. In fact, it is so thorough that people who have a lot of business correspondence to attend to and are only beginning to discover the utility of database managers would do well to consider Q&A as a word processor that has a file manager attached.

Lyrix

George R. Allen

Lyrix version 5.0 from The Santa Cruz Operation (SCO) is a word-processing package that you can use on many different classes of computers, from the IBM PC and compatibles to large systems such as the VAX-11/780. You can transfer text files written on the IBM PC to the larger systems as well. Lyrix is designed to operate in a multiuser environment under UNIX- and XENIX-based operating systems for both word-processing and desktop-publishing applications. It does not operate under a DOS environment on PCs. The version for the IBM PC and compatibles sells for $595; for larger systems, the price of the package varies.

I tested Lyrix on an IBM PC-compatible TeleVideo Model 2605 with 512K bytes of RAM and a 20-megabyte hard disk using SCO XENIX V Complete release 2.1. SCO says you can run Lyrix with a 10-megabyte hard disk, but I would not advise running it with less than a 20-megabyte hard disk.

I compared Lyrix to the UNIX standard vi editor with the associated UNIX text processing programs. The vi editor is the mainstay for word processing in the UNIX environment, even though it is not a true word processor but a text editor. Lyrix won hands down in this comparison. To test the multiuser capabilities of the software, I connected an ADDS Viewpoint terminal to the serial port on my computer to get two-user operation. Lyrix takes advantage of the file-security capabilities of the UNIX environment. In this environment, you can restrict word-processing files or documents to specific departments or individuals through the use of log-on passwords and file permissions. You can assign permissions to files, groups of people, or individuals to allow file access as required. You can also set up permissions for read-only, read-write, or nonpermission files.

Lyrix will allow only a single user to update a specific document at any one time. This prevents files from being overwritten and data being lost.

Some Comparisons

The vi editor is commonly used on many UNIX-based systems and is very popular; however, it's not easy to learn, and it lacks full-screen editing, menus, and online help. It cannot be easily customized...
Lyrix 5.0

Type
Word processor

Company
The Santa Cruz Operation Inc.
400 Encinal St.
P.O. Box 1900
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
(800) 626-8649

Format
Two or three 5¼-inch disks, depending on the computer you use

Computer
IBM PC, XT, AT, and compatibles; requires 180K bytes of memory and 64K bytes for each additional user (a minimum of 512K bytes of RAM and a 10-megabyte hard disk are recommended); also, a variety of minicomputers from DEC, NCR, Pyramid, and other companies

Necessary Software
SCO XENIX V operating system or any XENIX system that runs on an 8086-, 80286-, 80386-, or 68000-based computer

Language
C

Documentation
270-page user's manual; 140-page configuration manual; 40-page tutorial; 12-page quick-reference guide

Price
$595 for the IBM PC, XT, AT, and compatibles; contact SCO for other pricing and system requirements

APPLICATION REVIEWS

Lyrix has a flexible customization capability that allows you to set up multiple printers as required; you can set up as many printers as you have parallel or serial ports on your system. You can also set up a given printer in draft or near-let
ter-quality mode and add print-quality selections to one of the Lyrix menus. I used this capability to allow printing to either my Epson or Toshiba printer in draft or NQL modes as required.

In conjunction with UNIX, Lyrix enables you to use multiple printers simultaneously. Thus, it is possible on an IBM PC running Lyrix and SCO XENIX to print on several printers at once. I don't recommend this, as it causes the response times to slow down terribly. An IBM PC is just not fast enough to support this type of operation.

Lyrix also lets you add special command sequences to its menus. You can even customize Lyrix to look like WordStar, though this seemed like a lot of work to me; in addition, the Lyrix menus are easier to read and make more sense than WordStar's.

Desktop Publishing

If you were to compare the vi editor to WordStar in a desktop-publishing environment, you would find that WordStar is much easier to use, but vi offers more functionality. The vi editor, for example, offers automatic paragraph numbering, footnotes, headers and footers, justification, and multiple fonts. Math equation-formatting and support for output to phototypesetters are provided by the UNIX text processing programs, such as TROFF, which are normally used with the vi editor. Its table setup is cumbersome, however, and it cannot mix text and graphics.

Lyrix has almost all the capabilities of vi. It does not offer the equation-formatting or phototypesetting output. Like vi, it does not let you mix text and graphics. However, Lyrix makes it easy to set up tables and, in general, is easier to use than either vi or WordStar. Its commands make sense and are easy to remember. For example, esc t gets you to the top of your document, esc f is used to find a phrase in your document, and so forth.

Lyrix supports a multitude of printers, including Epson, Diablo, NEC, Okidata, and the Hewlett-Packard LaserJet. You can add additional printers by placing data in a configuration file called the Tcap file, which provides special effects such as underlining, boldfacing, and so forth. Good documentation and examples are provided to allow you to configure a special printer to your requirements.

The Lyrix spelling checker finds misspelled words between the current location of the cursor and the end of the file, and it suggests possible alternatives. It uses the 80,000-word Merriam-Webster Linguibase dictionary. I wrote this article under Lyrix and used the spelling checker to check the document. Only one or two cases occurred where the spelling checker did not display the proper spelling for me; I was quite impressed with its performance.

SCO XENIX and Lyrix

Some of the performance quirks of UNIX observable on larger UNIX-based systems occurred in exactly the same manner on my computer under SCO XENIX. One particular quirk that will occasionally be annoying to hunt-and-peck typists is that the characters typed on the keyboard do not always immediately appear on the screen. Sometimes there is a delay of up to one second after a character is typed before it is displayed. All characters appear on the screen when you use Lyrix, but, under some conditions, you can enter 10 to 15 characters on the keyboard before seeing them displayed. This occurs frequently on both superminicomputers and personal computers, and it appears to be related to how busy the UNIX system is at a given time. On a PC this will be most noticeable when you send a print file to the print spooler. I found the delay annoying, but it did not interfere with the operation of the system or detract from its usefulness. SCO recommends that a PC be limited to two simultaneous terminals to maintain a reasonable response time. You can install up to eight additional terminals, but actual operation should be limited to two at a time.

SCO has set up Lyrix as a shared program, that is, a single program with separate data areas for each user on the system. This maintains excellent response times for both users. I tested this by having two people type on two terminals simultaneously. Neither person was aware that the other was also using the system. I further tested the system by running Lyrix on one terminal and a large game on the other terminal. There was insufficient memory on my 512K-byte system to hold both programs in their entirety, so SCO XENIX attempted to accommodate both by swapping them back and forth between disk and memory. As a result, the system bogged down and became so sluggish that it was impractical to use. This is not a fault of SCO Lyrix or XENIX, but a condition caused by the limited memory of the IBM PC.

Since SCO XENIX will use only 640K bytes of memory on an IBM PC or compatible, a PC is not a good choice if you plan to run two or more programs on multiple terminals at the same time.
you expect to run an assortment of programs simultaneously, your best choice would be to use an IBM PC AT or compatible, on which SCO XENIX will support up to 16 megabytes of memory. Consequently, if you install sufficient memory in your PC AT, you should never run into these problems. For example, a colleague who runs SCO XENIX on a PC AT operates in a multiuser environment using different programs on several terminals. He has not experienced any sluggishness on his PC AT and is pleased with the response of the system.

If you currently use PC-DOS or MS-DOS and wish to convert to SCO XENIX for word processing in a multiuser environment, you can transfer files back and forth between DOS and SCO XENIX by using a series of utilities provided with the system. The main utility that I used was doscp, which allows you to copy files from the SCO XENIX portion of your hard disk to and from the DOS portion. This utility may not be of value in all cases; if the files transferred are encoded or are not in ASCII, they may not be intelligible under Lynx. I used doscp to transfer Lynx text files for this article to a DOS floppy disk.

Setting Up

The documentation supplied with both SCO XENIX and Lynix is quite good, and there is an enormous amount of it. This is both a plus and a minus, however. Any information that you need to know is in one of three manuals. Unfortunately, it may take a lot of wading through them to find the information that you need.

The manuals describe in detail how to configure and use SCO XENIX and Lynix under all conceivable conditions. The setup of SCO XENIX is straightforward and is adequately described in the installation guide supplied with the software. The only problem I encountered was that the instructions did not specifically say to install the printer on the system. When my printer did not work right away, I looked in the manual for printer-installation instructions. These instructions were clear and did not present any problems.

Installation time for XENIX is considerably longer than the installation time for a DOS system. It took me about seven hours to install SCO XENIX on my TeleVideo 2605 the first time. This included the time that SCO XENIX needed to format and verify the 20-megabyte hard disk on the computer. While the instructions are straightforward, the installation process will probably be intimidating to a computer neophyte. From a practical standpoint, the installation should be attempted only by someone who is familiar with computers in general. Prior knowledge of XENIX or UNIX is not required.

Installation of Lynix is quite simple and hardly bears mentioning. The process took me only about a half hour.

A Good Choice for ATs

I have used SCO XENIX with the vi editor for almost a year and have had no problems. I have also used WordStar and Microsoft Windows Write. However, I now use Lynix exclusively because of its ease of use and flexibility. In my working environment where my two terminals both run Lynix, performance is good using the IBM PC. I strongly recommend, however, that if you consider using Lynix and SCO XENIX, that you purchase a PC AT-compatible system to avoid the occasional response problems caused by the slower IBM PC.

George R. Allen (P.O. Box 583, Binghamton, NY 13902) has been involved with computer systems for the past 23 years. He is now a software design manager for a large industrial firm, where he works with UNIX-based systems.

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STELLA

Stephen B. Robinson's review of STELLA (December 1986) is exemplary in its dispassionate discussion of what the program can do, as well as the chief things it cannot do—cut, copy, and paste. But STELLA is such a bright star in the software firmament that one could be forgiven for displaying some passion in response to its appearance. Were I to be banished to a desert island with a solar-powered Macintosh and five programs, STELLA would be one of them. I have three wishes for future versions of STELLA: to be able to add text to diagrams and graphs, to have a simulation pause at programmed times for entry of data through the keyboard, and to have a cut-and-paste feature. Let's hope that the other omissions that I have mentioned will also be included.

Don Watson
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

QuickBASIC 2.0

I enjoyed reading Dennis Dykstra's review of Microsoft QuickBASIC 2.0 (February). I own and use QuickBASIC 2.0, BASICA, and True BASIC 2.0. QuickBASIC 2.0 is, of course, an enormous improvement over prior Microsoft compiler/interpreter versions of BASIC and includes a major restructuring of the language. My major regret is that QuickBASIC 2.0 was compared only to ZBasic and GW-BASIC in the review.

I urge BYTE to conduct a real apples-to-apples comparison of QuickBASIC 2.0, True BASIC 2.0, and, perhaps, BetterBASIC. All now have run-time packages that permit the generation of stand-alone .EXE programs. QuickBASIC 2.0 is very good, but, in my opinion, True BASIC 2.0 shines even brighter.

Jerry Davis
Concord, MA

Toshiba T1100 Plus

As an owner and user of a T1100 Plus undergoing the usual second thoughts, I was interested in John D. Unger's article "Four Portable Computers" in the February issue. Oddly enough, the only problem I have had with my T1100 Plus is in precisely the same area in which I use it most frequently—running Microsoft Word. The integrated keypad design of the T1100 Plus simply will not work with several of the outline-processing features of Word 3.0. However, that is the only compatibility problem I've run into so far.

I would like to point out that Toshiba's Floppy Link, which allows the T1100 Plus to use a desktop's 5 1/4-inch drive as its own, works with only a limited number of machines and is guaranteed only for the IBM PC and the Compaq.

Finally, the T1100 Plus comes with MS-DOS 2.11, but not with GW-BASIC; in fact, errata slips in the documentation that came with my T1100 Plus are incorrect. The correct figures appear below.

Sound level is in DB (0 DB = .0002ubar); * = not available.

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Inquiry 116 for End-Users. Inquiry 117 for DEALERS ONLY.
Bye-Bye Big Kat

Jerry Pournelle

I started this on the BART train under the San Francisco Bay. I was trying to write on Zebediah, my Zenith Z-181 portable, but I didn’t get very much done.

It wasn’t Zeb’s fault. He is a bit heavy, and the case is slick enough that it will slip off your lap if you’re not careful, but it is possible to hold the machine there; and that bright blue backlit screen is readable in any light conditions I’ve yet found. In my experience, two full-feature PC-DOS portables are worth considering: the Z-181 and the Toshiba T3100 with its hard disk. The Toshiba isn’t a laptop, but the Z-181 is supposed to be. It runs for hours on batteries. The screen is large enough. But I simply couldn’t write on that BART train.

The problem wasn’t the computer, but the American Tourister case. I found it impossible to leave the machine in the case, and nearly as difficult to take the machine out and close it up. There’s almost no way to keep disks in that case once it’s been opened: the thing is optimally designed to drip its contents onto the floor. Since the Z-181 runs only a few hours—three to five, depending on how much disk access you do—between charges, I generally want the somewhat bit heavy, and the case is slick enough to use it. This time I was.

Communication by Alligator

It’s a tendency in modern hotels. The phone system is set up so you don’t have to talk to anyone to dial out; just dial 8, or 9, and then the number. The phones are almost all Touch-Tone, too, so it ought to be easy to connect them to modems. It seldom is easy, though, because the telephone instrument is hard-wired into the system. Since nearly all modems now expect you to use a modular plug, this presents a problem if it’s midnight in the San Francisco Hilton and you desperately need to log on to BIX.

I was in that situation recently. I thought of two possible solutions. First, I carry a spare telephone cord. The instrument was hard-wired, but was the other end at the wall? Alas, that was well behind the bed, and short of moving a massive piece of furniture, I wasn’t going to find out. (Incidentally, why are phones always at the bed and never at the worktable, even in hotels that say they cater to business travelers?)

The second solution was given to me by Dr. Robert Bussard, who sent me a modular plug that ends in four color-coded alligator clips. I’d carried it to many places, but I’d never been desperate enough to use it. This time I was.

With a certain amount of trepidation, I took the telephone apart with my Swiss army knife. The cover came off easily enough, and once inside the job was simple, barring the fact that the phone was now permanently off the hook. The wires from the wall plug terminated just inside the instrument and had the four colors all phone lines seem to have now. Two of them are still called “tip” and “ring,” presumably carryover names from the days when phone plugs and jacks were larger. I don’t know which is which, or indeed which two of the four lines are significant, so I used the alligator clips to connect similar colors of all four lines from my bit of phone cable and plugged the other end into the line port on the Z-181’s modem.

Voila! Everything worked fine. There was a bit of line noise, and after I was connected to BIX I managed to hang up the phone instrument. I was still connected, and most of the noise went away. As I’d suspected, the telephone instrument was now totally irrelevant.

I don’t suppose the Hilton would have approved, but in fact I had no problems, either with BIX or in getting the phone put back together. Let me hasten to add that I don’t recommend that you try this.

Communications, Continued

Last month I mentioned the difficulties I had in getting the Z-181 to communicate files to Big Kat, the Kaypro 286i PC AT clone. The Zenith PCXFER program says “use a null modem,” but in fact that’s an insufficient instruction. What they mean by “null modem” is a cable of two of them are still called “tip” and “ring,” presumably carryover names from the days when phone plugs and jacks were larger. I don’t know which is which, or indeed which two of the four colors all phone lines seem to have now. Two of them are still called “tip” and “ring,” presumably carryover names from the days when phone plugs and jacks were larger. And that’s fine: they’re at it, they might design a lightweight handle to attach to the computer itself.

Apparantly Zenith put all its design skill into the Z-181 itself and ordered the case and power supply as afterthoughts. If the Z-181 sells as well as it ought to, someone will make a fortune selling well-designed cases to carry it in. While they’re at it, they might design a lightweight handle to attach to the computer itself.

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CHAO MANOR

20. Pins 7 and 8 go straight through. Given all that, PCXFER worked fine to transfer files to and from Lucy Van Pelt, our genuine IBM PC; and indeed, it works with any normal PC or XT. The program is a little slow, but it's automatic and understands wild-card instructions.

I couldn’t get PCXFER and that cable to work with an AT. It turns out there was a very good reason: 25-pin connectors on AT-style machines, including the Kaypro, are parallel ports. Serial ports on an AT have only 9 pins.

Okay, I should have known that. It’s even stated in Kaypro’s documents, and now that I’m sensitized I’ve seen it elsewhere. The fact is, I didn’t know.

The IBM PC has two 25-pin ports, one serial, one parallel. The Z-181 has two 25-pin ports (actually three), and one is the serial port. The Kaypro 286i AT has two 25-pin connectors on the back. One is on the Hercules Color Card video board and is clearly labeled parallel. I ran the printer fine. The other is, of course, on the I/O card that also contains a 9-pin port. For not very intelligent reasons, I assumed those were two different serial ports, or possibly two different configurations of the same serial port. The 9-pin port was used to connect the Logitech mouse, and it worked fine. The 25-pin port wouldn’t work with PCXFER, even with the snazzy “null modem” cable I’d made to Zenith’s specs.

I never would work, of course, because the 25-pin port is an extra parallel port and can even be connected to another parallel device, provided only that both devices aren’t turned on at the same time.

I found this out from BIX correspondents shortly after filing last month’s column. It says a lot for the wretched state of “standards” in this industry that so few were surprised by my problems that it took a week before someone noticed I was trying to do the impossible. People expect serial communications problems.

Alas, the Zenith PCXFER documents don’t give any clues about cabling to a 9-pin connector. I have a couple of cables that do have a 25-pin port on one end and a 9-pin port on the other, and using those and WireTap (an inexpensive breakout box; see last month’s column) I experimented for an hour, but I never did get the Z-181 to talk to the Kaypro or to a Zenith Z-248 AT clone for that matter.

Eventually I ran out of time. I used PCXFER to send my files from the Z-181 into Lucy Van Pelt, then used the CompuPro network to transfer those files to the big CompuPro, and from that to the Kaypro. It meant one more copy command, but nothing else special, so except for continued
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stringing the network wires it wasn’t a lot harder than doing it directly.

I’ve found another use for the CompuPro network. All my AT machines have 96-tracks-per-inch “quad-density” disk drives. Those drives read normal PC and XT disks fine; but when they write files, the probability that a 48-tpi “normal” PC drive will be able to read them is very low. The network solved the problem nicely: we use it to transfer the file to a PC with 48-tpi drives and let it write the file. Now anything can read it.

Enter Zelda
For more than a year, the main PC-DOS machine at Chaos Manor has been Big Kat. He’s been so good, in fact, that I’ve turned down numerous offers of competing AT machines.

He’s still working fine; but eventually it was time for a change, if only because I can’t go on writing about the same machine forever. When Zenith asked me to look at the Z-248 AT clone, it wasn’t a difficult decision. It’s the standard machine used at the service academies, and I’m rather fond of Zenith anyway. Their stuff is reliable, and I like their ROM monitor. It took Zenith a while to get one of the machines to me, and until they did I kept Big Kat on-line; but eventually the Z-248 arrived.

First things first. Get the new machine running. That was no problem. When I turned it on, it said “not a bootable partition.” When in doubt, read the instructions, and five minutes later I knew how to boot the machine with its floppy and partition the 30-megabyte hard disk. Another five minutes and the hard disk was formatted and set up with command files to be the boot disk.

There was one potential problem. The Z-248 came with an enhanced graphics adapter color board and Zenith’s ZVM-1380 13-inchEGA color monitor. I was a little worried that text on the screen might not be big enough for me to be comfortable with. Also, about once every dozen times when I booted the system, the screen images were broken and fuzzy. The condition corrected itself on rebooting, but it was annoying.

It didn’t seem fatal. I put it down to something being jarred in shipping and figured that at worst Zenith would send me a new video board.

Now I was left with the question of what to do with Big Kat, a thoroughly debugged and operational AT clone who has served me well for more than a year. In fact, the decision was simple enough. Frank, my #2 son, is studying business and finance at USC and needs a computer. PCs are fine, but ATs are better; with permission from Kaypro, Big Kat would become Frank’s machine.

Since Big Kat had been the main PC-DOS machine here, he had a lot of files I’d need on the Zenith. On the other hand, I have a lot of programs I wasn’t about to send down to USC. In some cases, I legally own only one copy. Most publishers probably wouldn’t mind if I lend my son a copy, but I won’t do that without permission. Others are prerelease. And, of course, some are games: college students get enough distractions without my furnishing more. I wanted to keep those files for me, but they’d sure have to be removed from Big Kat.

The simple solution would have been to use Fastback: back up all of Big Kat’s files, then restore them on the Z-248. I could then go through Big Kat’s files and delete as needed. I didn’t think of that. I supposed it’s partly because Big Kat had a lot of files that ought to have been deleted long ago, and this was a good opportunity to clean things up. Anyway, I used the network.

Networking on My Own
I had an extra CompuPro ARCNET PC board. Since the Zenith was the Z-248, it seemed reasonable to address it as node 48 (Big Kat had already been designated as 28). Of course, that would be hexadecimal 48, since that’s how you specify node numbers on the CompuPro network; but I have SideKick, which has a disk accessory calculator that translates hexadecimal to decimal to binary, so surely it should be no problem. I opened the CompuPro ARCNET PC documents with considerable hope.

Hah. Five minutes later I was hopelessly confused. Eventually I called CompuPro and asked for technical support. I got a young chap who seemed to know what he was doing. He chattered gaily about the condition of his system, the individual switches—on SW-2, the eight-paddle DIP switch that tells the machine what node it is. I set them and hit Ctrl-Alt-Del.

Nothing happened, of course. You first have to turn off the machine before the ARCNET PC card can read its own switch settings. Try again.

Unfortunately, that didn’t work either. Back to phone CompuPro. This time I got Len Ott, CompuPro’s very practical software guru. Len’s solution was simple: use DEBUG to see what number the ARCNET PC board thought it was reading. A minute later we knew it wasn’t reading 48 hexadecimal. Back to the DIP switch and exactly reverse each paddle. Turn off the machine. Fire it up again. Voila! Everything worked fine.
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As with most such problems, what was needed here was examples. In this case, it needed some drawings of switch settings and their corresponding numbers, plus a couple of tables. Fortunately, CompuPro has hired an editorial consultant to revise the documents. I have some new data for her attention.

After that the network worked like a charm. Of course, DOS is too stupid to let me use the network in a single operation; that is, you can't, at the Zenith, issue a command that will bring you a file from the Kaypro, nor can you, from the Kaypro, send a file to the Zenith. Instead, you have to use the Kaypro to send a file to, say, the Golem, my big CompuPro 286/Z80 machine, then go to the Zenith, set up the directory structure you like, and call in the files from the Golem.

To do this, I told both the Kaypro and the Z-248 that they had a local drive called M, which was actually the M-Drive/H (RAM disk) on the Golem. (The network lets you name any drive on any machine any arbitrary thing you like, as long as it isn't something you already have. For example, I could not call a networked drive C if I already had a hardwired drive named C attached to that terminal.) This made things go faster.

Then I noticed that my newly transferred files didn't have date and time stamps. It took a second before I realized why. The Golem's M drive is formatted as Concurrent CP/M media, and while DOS files—including command files—are stored intact, and work fine, the date and time stamps were lost on the way through. That problem was cured by using the C logical drive partition on the Golem; C is configured as MS-DOS media.

After that we had no problems. I experimented with PC Sweep, a couple of other shareware file manager programs, and various other stuff, with no surprises. PC Sweep running on the Z-248 is perfectly willing to believe that the M drive is nothing special and will tag files for transfer or deletion; while the Golem is smart enough to accept commands through the network from the Zenith. In a couple of hours, I had reorganized and transferred all my files.

Norton's Wipedisk

Once I'd done all that, there was still a problem. I'd erased files from Big Kat, but it would still be possible for someone down at USC to recover them; and while I trust my son, I didn't want him to have to put unusually severe security restrictions on access to the machine.

One solution might be to use Fastback to record all the data, then format the hard disk. Alas, I have a couple of utility programs that swear they can recover data even from a disk reformatted under DOS, and while I wasn't sending those programs with Frank, I make no doubt there are plenty of USC students who either have them or could write their own. Surely there's a way to permanently erase files.

There are lots of PC-DOS utility programs, some in the public domain, some shareware; so many that it's impossible to keep track of them all. I've found by and large, though, that the latest edition of The Norton Utilities will solve at least 90 percent of the DOS problems I run into. Norton's programs are well documented, both on how to use them and what they do. It seemed reasonable to look into the Norton manual to see if there was help for the current situation.

There was. Norton's Wipedisk doesn't just erase files, it overwrites them. I'd never used it before, so I ran Fastback to get backup copies of all the files we'd just transferred, then invoked Norton's Wipedisk with the /E option, which, according to the manual, "specifies that only the continued"
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erased or unused data space will be wiped; this saves current data, but wipes erased data."

I am pleased to report that it does just what it says. It's not particularly fast: on a 20-megabyte hard disk about half full, it took most of dinnertime. On the other hand, under the /E option it runs unattended, and when it was finished, I couldn't find a program that would recover any of the wiped data.

I've said this before: if you do much work with DOS, you should have a copy of The Norton Utilities. There may be a work with DOS, you should have a copy of the Norton Utilities. There may be a program that shows you just how to set the switches.

The Zenith, however, is faster than most AT clones. It comes with no wait-state memory. I set the Cheetah Combo switches to tell it that, and instantly I had a 640K-byte system with an unknown amount of expanded memory. Next thing was to tell the Z-248 about its new memory. That turns out to be easy to do, since unlike the Kaypro, the Zenith tells you how much conventional and expanded memory it has. Then you have to go into the ROM monitor and change the setup. (I don't know why the machine doesn't just tell itself about the changes.)

The only use that I've found for expanded—opposed to extended—memory is as RAM disk. Installing that is simple enough. Just use the VDISK.SYS that comes with PC-DOS. In advice from Cheetah's Gene Sumrall, I put DEVICE = VDISK.SYS 4096 256 256/E into the CONFIG.SYS file. That tells the RAM disk to grab everything it can (up to 4096K bytes), format it into 256-byte sectors, and leave room for 256 entries in the directory. I would forget memory, I might decide to leave room for only 128 entries.

Once that's done you have to reboot. The first time I tried it didn't work. I had VDISK.SYS in a subdirectory, and the PC looks for CONFIG.SYS in the root directory before it reads the PATH instructions that can tell it to look at subdirectories. Moving VDISK.SYS to the root directory fixed things, and at the next reboot I had 640K bytes of main memory and a 2.48-megabyte RAM disk labeled drive D.

The Cheetah Combo comes with some interesting software. One program will force your programs to use high memory before low to make efficient use of the superfast Cheetah no-wait memory. Because the Z-248 is already plenty speedy, I didn't bother with that except to test it out. It works, but I saw no real speed improvement. With another machine I probably would have.

Above Disc

RAM disk is useful, but my problem is that I like memory-resident software. That eats memory, and neither expanded memory nor RAM disk is a bit of help.

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Above Disc virtual memory emulator.

Above Disc is a memory-resident program that uses about 50K bytes of regular memory. It uses that to control a specified portion of your RAM disk and turn that into the equivalent of extended or smart memory. The program swaps in and out of regular memory according to the rules of the EMS standard. In other words, it creates what the big computer people call virtual memory.

Installing Above Disc is simple, provided that you read the entire manual before starting. It isn’t that long a manual, so this is no real problem, however there are a number of caveats about Above Disc, and you’d better be aware of them.

Once Above Disc was in place, I rebooted to see what it would do for Ready!. The result was very nice: Ready! took up 3K bytes of conventional memory and 160K bytes of the expanded memory created by Above Disc. Ready! also worked perfectly.

Unfortunately, Ready! is the only memory-resident program I’m addicted to that can make use of expanded memory. Philippe Kahn tells me he’ll have an EMS version of SideKick Real Soon Now. However, the Above Disc scheme works with DESQview, Lotus 1-2-3, Symphony, Reflex 1.1, and other programs engineered to take advantage of EMS. The instructions explicitly say it will not work with Javelin.

Above Disc doesn’t have to use RAM disk to do its thing: you can designate part of your hard disk, or even a floppy disk, as “expanded memory,” and Above Disc will swap stuff in and out of a reserved area on that disk. Of course it won’t be very fast, and if you remove the floppy at some point during the proceedings, you’ll really mess things up; but it will work.

The DESQview people, and some others, tell me that Above Disc isn’t really EMS-standard expanded memory, and I’m sure they’re right; but it does quite a lot, and we haven’t had any problems with it. The Cheetah Combo and Above Disc make a good combination.

**Zelda Goes Mad**

I’d had the Z-248 all weekend, and it was giving me no problems, so I sent Big Kat off to USC with Frank. Given the rugged construction of the Kaypro, I wasn’t worried about it, and I was right: despite having a bunch of business students banging away on it, Big Kat is working fine.

Alas, that wasn’t true of the Z-248. The instant Big Kat left the house, the Z-248 did odd things. First, her screen images began to dissolve, until there were no more than 25 percent of the pixels on the screen. English written in the roman alphabet has a lot of redundancy, so I could just make out words and commands; but it sure wasn’t easy.

Resetting the machine would generally cure the screen problem, but it often would introduce a different difficulty: the Above Disc disk-swapping system would load itself and report that all was well, but then Ready!, loading itself on start-up, couldn’t find it. Instead, about half the time, Ready! would load itself entirely into conventional memory, as if the Above Disc pseudo-expanded memory weren’t there at all.

Then I had real problems getting the machine to work with the OmniTel modem. I’ve had that modem in Big Kat for two years with no glitch whatsoever, and I refused to believe it had gone sour—and indeed, rebooting would often cure that problem, too. After that I had problems with the ARCNET PC and even with the PATH command.

None of this happened every time, which was annoying. Computers aren’t supposed to do things sometimes. It was time for some serious diagnostics.
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When I mentioned these problems on BIX, Barbara Clifford pointed out that the machine clearly should be named Zelda, after F. Scott Fitzgerald's very fast, and somewhat flaky, wife. Phone consultation with Wayne Rash, who did the formal (and very favorable) review of the Z-248 in the December 1986 issue of BYTE, produced a more technical diagnosis: "It sounds like it's all screwed up."

Waiting for Igor

I called Zenith for help. As luck would have it, the relevant Zenith officials weren't in their offices in Chicago. They were out here; to be exact, in Santa Fe Springs, not more than 20 miles from here. As a result, it took a full day to reach Glen Nelson and explain the problem.

"I don't know if it's the CPU or the video board or both," I said.

"Sounds like the machine was damaged in transportation," Nelson told me.

"That's the identical machine Wayne Rash reviewed, and we tested it before we shipped it to you. Let me send you a new one."

That sounded reasonable, but for a test I asked that they send new CPU and video boards. Incidentally, that's one of Zenith's better features: the CPU and system memory are on cards just like everything else, making both repairs and upgrades much easier.

Glen promised to get the boards sent Federal Express, and I went back to trying to understand an increasingly inarticulate Zelda. She was deteriorating rapidly. Sometimes only 10 percent of the pixels would be displayed on-screen. She'd often lose all her path information. Sometimes she'd be unable to find the modem.

My wife watched over my shoulder during one of Zelda's bad spells. "Give up," she said.

"Good advice, but right now this is the only machine I can use to BIX."

"Good heavens. What will you do?"

"It's not so bad," I said. "They're sending a new brain for transplant."

"And when does Igor arrive?"

Roberta asked.

"Tomorrow," I said.

Of course the new brain didn't come the next day, or the day after, so there we were, like Dr. Frankenstein waiting for his crazed assistant to come back with a new brain.

Eventually the boards arrived, with mixed results: the video problems went away, but the Above Disc program didn't consistently work. At that point I went off to a conference.

Zelda Cured

When I got back there was a new Z-248 waiting.


This time I took the simple way: I used the new Fastback with no copy protection. I copied the floppy disk to my hard disk, then tried to run the program. That didn't work. Even though there's no copy protection, you must use the Install program. Once you've done that you can put the floppy away.

Fastback is quite easy to use, and pretty soon I had all my programs stored on 12 quad-density disks. The next thing was to transfer all those over to the new Zenith Z-248. I had a moment of panic at my first attempt: the Fastback Restore
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Back in 1977 I looked at all the available computer systems that could be used for business and serious writing. In those days S-100 systems dominated the micro industry, and it wasn't hard to decide what to get. I bought Zeke II, a CompuPro Z80 system. My partner Larry Niven, who knows little about computers and wants to know less, had our consultant Tony Pietsch build him a copy (actually, two copies) of what I got.

Neither of us has ever regretted that decision. We have written millions of words, including three best-selling novels, on those computers. They still work, and work well.

Unfortunately, they're not immortal. Tony Pietsch is moving to Santa Barbara. Spare parts are hard to come by.

There are other intimations of mortality. Last week, as is my practice, I packed Zeke—the world's least portable micro—into the trunk of my convertible and headed for a motel, there to get as much done on a novel—Prince of Mercenaries, a Falkenberg/CoDominium novel, for those interested—as I could in five days without telephone and mail interruptions. When I got there and set Zeke up, blue smoke poured out of his 8-inch disk-drive enclosure.

It was clearly panic time, but in fact I managed to stay calm. Proceed slowly. Take things apart. Unplug cables. Work logically. After about 10 minutes it was clear: something had happened to the power supply in the disk-drive enclosure. The drives themselves were all right and so was the computer.

A quick call to Priority One established that they had, in stock, 8-inch disk-drive enclosures with power supply at a reasonable price. I drove out, bought one, brought it back to the motel, and re-mounted the drives. Within two hours Zeke was humming along. Incidentally, as far as I can tell, transporting Zeke had caused a nut to work loose from one of the bolts holding the fan, and that nut had shaken into a spot where it could short... continued
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something. Anyway, I'd lost little but time, and not a lot of that; but it does give pause to think. Suppose I couldn't find a new enclosure?

A few days later, I was talking with Larry and Marilyn Niven. Marilyn, unlike Larry, does know something about computers. After all, she took a degree in mathematics under Marvin Minsky at MIT. We all agreed that one day soon we'd have to replace our ancient Z80 machines with something else.

Given the way the world is going, that something else will likely be some kind of PC AT compatible with an EGA card. We'll also need a new text editor, one that's as nearly like WRITE as we can find; and that will probably be WordPerfect.

None of this is certain, but we've got WordPerfect 4.2 working with the CompuPro ARCNET PC, something that I couldn't do with 4.1. Now if we can just get oversize EGA monitors.

Still, things change like dreams in this micro world. At CES I was taken upstairs and shown the new Commodore Amiga 2000; the one I saw combined in the same box both a 68020 Amiga and an 8086 PCCompatible; and the PC side of the box could take accelerator boards like the Orchid Turbo EGA. Alas, what they later could take accelerator boards like the PCCompatible; and the PC side of the box both a 68020 Amiga and an 8086 2000; the one I saw combined in the same box both a 68020 Amiga and an 8086 2000; the one I saw combined in the same box both a 68020 Amiga and an 8086 2000; the one I saw combined in the same box both a 68020 Amiga and an 8086 2000; the one I saw combined in the same box both a 68020 Amiga and an 8086 2000; the one I saw combined in the same box both a 68020 Amiga and an 8086 2000; the one I saw combined in the same box both a 68020 Amiga and an 8086 2000; the one I saw combined in the same box both a 68020 Amiga and an 8086.

But Commodore potentially has a machine to compete with the Macintosh II if they'll just develop it properly.

Meanwhile, Cheetah has a 386 add-on that will turn a normal AT into about nine virtual machines, neatly solving the problem of what to do about memory-resident programs.

By the time you read this, Apple will have their Mac II, the open Macintosh, and IBM will have a new 386. Microsoft will have Advanced DOS Real Soon Now.

With developments like that going on, why change until you have to?

**Winding Down**

As usual, I started this column full of good intentions. I spent hours selecting software and covered my desk with really good stuff; and now, before I've got to much of it, I'm out of space.

I do want to say something about Russ Walter's amazing series, *The Secret Guide to Computers*, which is now available in three volumes, $8 each, from the author. If you need to understand computers and haven't had much luck at it; if you have to teach other people about computers; or if you just want to read some good books about computers; then send a check for $24 to Russ Walter, 22 Ashland St., Somerville, MA 02144. Interested parties are invited to write for a brochure before ordering. I can't think you won't like the books, and even if you don't, you'll find someone to give them to who will. Highly recommended.

Then there were the MacWorld Expo- sition and the Seybold Conference on Desktop Communications. Both were worth attending. On the other hand, the most exciting announcement at the Seybold Conference was Apple'share, a very impressive networking program that links Macintoshes; and there's not a lot of point in talking about the Macintosh until Apple releases the open Mac. The delay between my writing this and your seeing it is, due to heroic efforts by the BYTE publishing people, getting shorter, but it's not that short.

There are two books of the month: *Flim-Flam* by James Randi (Prometheus Books, 700 East Amherst St., Buffalo, NY 14215) and *On the Frontiers of Science: Strange Machines You Can Build* by G. Harry Stine (Atheneum). James ("the amazing") Randi is a lifelong skeptic who constantly carries a check for $10,000 that he will pay to anyone who can show him a "paranormal" result he can't explain or duplicate with prestidigitation; while Harry Stine is a rocket engineer who doesn't exactly believe in odd things like dowsing, but who claims to have used such devices with consistent results and will tell you how to make and operate dowsing rods. I've met Randi, and I find his extreme skepticism irritating, while Harry Stine has been a close friend for years. One day I'll build and test some of the machines he describes. Meanwhile, if I had to bet money, I'd bet with Randi, but my heart's with Harry Stine's view.

The game of the month is Strategic Conquest Plus for the Macintosh. It used up far more of my time than I'll admit to anyone and is quite simply the best strategic microcomputer war game I've ever encountered. I've managed to win at level 13, but just barely. Now I'm at 14, and in the fight of my life. Highly recommended so long as you understand that it's quite addictive.

Last-minute report: Big Kat is doing fine at USC. It's a great machine for a student. Now, with any luck, I'll get to that mess of stuff on my desk.

Jerry Pournelle welcomes readers' comments and opinions. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Jerry Pournelle, c/o BYTE, One Phoenix Mill Lane, Peterborough, NH 03458. Please put your address on the letter as well as on the envelope. Due to the high volume of letters, Jerry cannot guarantee a personal reply.

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| Cheetah Combo | $395 |
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| Fastback | $179 |
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Bruce Webster

It's mid-January as I start this column, and the wind outside is literally howling. A mass of very cold air has come to visit from the north pole; temperatures have plummeted, and gale-force winds out of Provo Canyon have pushed the windchill factor below zero. This is the first time it has really felt like winter all year. The ski resorts, which had a terrible holiday season, wish that this had hit about a month earlier. Since I don't ski, I don't really care. But on to more important matters.

If there's a theme to this column, it's desktop publishing. It was the dominant theme of the MacWorld Exposition, and some of the products I will look at this month (like the Radius Full Page Display for the Mac) are related to desktop publishing. It doesn't mean that I'm getting away from a technical slant, but during the next few years the personal computer market is going to be heavily influenced by desktop publishing, and those of you looking for new products to develop might well keep that in mind.

Industry Update

Apple announced a new version of the Apple IIe this past week, replacing the old model. The major differences are an expanded keyboard and a platinum case, both of which are designed to bring it into line with the IIGS. The list price is still $829 for the base unit—that price doesn't include monitor or disk drives—and the IIGS upgrade is still $495. It's a good move for Apple, but the price is still quite high, considering that $1095 is now the list price for an Atari 1040ST (1 megabyte of RAM, 68000 microprocessor) with an RGB monitor and a built-in 720K-byte drive.

Speaking of the IIGS, Apple appears to be having a supply problem. While at the MacWorld Exposition, I talked with several companies that also make IIGS products. All these companies indicated that sales of IIGS items were very poor; several estimated the number of IIGS systems shipped to date (early January) at around 20,000. This jibes with reports I've had from some dealers that they didn't get any IIGS systems until just before Christmas. It also explains why Apple turned down my request for a IIGS on editorial loan, even though I explained that a system unit upon which you can set your monitor, and so on.

More important, they've designed in an expansion path, using an external bus (like the Amiga). Of course, I thought that the Amiga had pretty much proved that an expansion bus wasn't nearly as nice as a few slots, but the bus still beats the relatively closed architecture of the 520ST and 1040ST. Atari also announced a new line of low-cost MS-DOS (IBM-compatible) machines. That startled me since the MS-DOS market is rather cutthroat right now, but Jack Tramiel has cut throats with the best of them, so maybe I shouldn't be surprised. Look for a full report in an upcoming column once I get my hands on the systems.

Commodore also announced some MS-DOS systems; theirs are more expensive than Atari's, but they're also more expandable. And I understand that Commodore was privately showing some other new machines that may well have been announced by the time this sees print. IBM has yet to announce anything, though (as in times past) various publications are running lengthy articles on unannounced (and possibly imaginary) systems. Most rumors focus on a new line of machines that are relatively cheap (for IBM) and have some degree of MS-DOS compatibility but that have proprietary silicon and a different expansion bus than the current MS-DOS systems.

I'd be interested in seeing IBM introduce such machines; my personal feeling is that they'd go the way of the IBM PCjr, the IBM Portable (not to be confused with the IBM Convertible), the never-materialized PC II, and the IBM RT series. Speaking of which, is there anyone out there who has actually bought an IBM RT or who works for a company that bought one? I've heard that IBM donated a number of RTs to Carnegie Mellon, but I have yet to hear of a single customer who paid cash for one.

Bruce Webster, a consulting editor for BYTE, can be reached c/o BYTE, P.O. Box 1910, Orem, UT 84057, or on BIX as bwebster.
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If you have, please write me a letter or send me a message via BIX, MCI, or CompuServe.

MacWorld Exposition

Suits. Lots of suits. If I had to put my finger on what was distinctive about this year's MacWorld Exposition in San Francisco, it would be the large crowds of serious businessmen (and businesswomen) in suits, filling the Moscone Center during the Thursday and Friday sessions that were supposed to be lightly attended. The Mac, my friends, is finally being taken seriously by the business community. Most significant, though, is that it appears to be the end users, not the data processing managers, who are so treating the Mac. They want powerful spreadsheets, innovative database programs, and high-quality publishing software, and they don't want to go through hours of training to learn how to use them. Also, they don't give a hoot if their machine doesn't have those magic letters "IBM" on it.

MacWorld also showed why the Macintosh is still at the leading edge in desktop publishing. The long drought of word processing software has finally ended (thanks to Apple's halt to bundling MacWrite with each Macintosh). Five different word processors were on display: Microsoft Word 3.0, FullWrite, MindWrite, WordPerfect, and Write Now. On top of that were three different publishing programs—PageMaker 2.0, ReadySetGo 3, and MacPublisher III—each of which is ahead of what's available on any other system (although PageMaker 2.0 is due to be released soon on the IBM PC). It's interesting to see how these two groups of products are converging on one another, each side gaining more and more of the features of the other. Also, Adobe showed its Illustrator program, which lets you quickly and easily create object-based illustrations from digitized images.

Aiding all this were three external screens for the Macintosh. Radius had its FPD (Full Page Display), a 640 by 646 display for $1995. The FPD is reviewed in detail later in this column. The Big Picture, from E-Machines, offers a 1024 by 808 display for the same price. The final one is the MegaScreen II from MicroGraphic Images. It has the largest display—1024 by 900—and the largest price tag: $2495 for a basic unit, $2995 for one with NTSC output as well and options for a 68881 math coprocessor and/or a 20-megabyte hard disk (both at extra cost).

Inexpensive SCSI hard drives for the Mac are also proliferating. The installed base of Macs has grown big enough to drive the installed base of Macs has grown big enough to drive.

Levco, maker of the Prodigy 4 (it includes a 68020 with a 68881) upgrade, has come out with a lower-cost version. The Prodigy Prime sells for $1995 and includes a 16-megahertz 68020, 1 megabyte of RAM (using 32-bit data path), and an SCSI; a 2-megabyte version sells for $2750. It has sockets for a 68881 math coprocessor and a 68851 memory management unit; memory expansion is limited primarily by cost and software (the spec sheet gives an upper limit of 32 megabytes). The original Prodigy 4 (sans hard disk) has come down in price itself; you can now get it for "only" $4995, which buys you a 68020, a 68881, 4 megabytes of RAM (using 1-megabit chips), and an SCSI.

Incidentally, MicroGraphic Images had in its press kit a release touting the compatibility between the MegaScreen II and the Prodigy Prime. In other words, you can hook both up to the same Mac, and it works just fine (or so the press release said). I'd love to get my hands on such a system, but I'm afraid it would spoil me terribly.

Also, Levco may finally have a competitor. MacMemory Inc. was demonstrating its TurboMax upgrade for the Macintosh. The TurboMax has a 16-MHz 68000, 1 1/2 megabytes of RAM, a socket for a 68881, and a "superspeed" SCSI. It's listed at $1299 and is supposed to be available now. Table 1 shows the timings claimed by MacMemory versus those claimed by Levco. These benchmarks were done using Consulair's 68020 C compiler, with direct access to the 68881 for the Whetstone benchmark on the Prodigy Prime and the TurboMax.

Speaking of Consulair, Bill and Ann Duvall were there, introducing MacC Jr., an 80 C development system for the Macintosh. I haven't had a chance to test it yet—look for that next month—but it looks like a fairly complete system for a very low price. Those of you thinking of doing C programming on the Mac could do a lot worse than to buy this.

All in all, I had a great time at MacWorld. The show is now larger, more lively, and more interesting than the West Coast Computer Fair. I'm tempted to try to attend the one in Boston this summer; I'll have to see what's happening then.

ReadySetGo 3

I don't talk much about applications in my column, but I wanted to mention this product. It's a member of the latest generation of desktop publishing software for the Mac (along with PageMaker 2.0 and MacPublisher III). For those of you unfamiliar with desktop publishing software, it lets you create your document (no, you don't need a separate word processor), establishing just how each page is laid out. You can easily integrate graphics, move blocks around, and generally do just what you'd want to do to create ready-for-printing documents.

RSG3 works well. I used it to lay out my Fritznie Award certificates. I did have to look at the manual once or twice, but beyond that, I was easily able to figure out how it worked. And the resulting certificates looked great when they came out on the LaserWriter.

Be warned, though: Desktop publishing is addictive. Once you've laid out a full-page document, all sorts of ideas start springing up in your head: fliers, posters, newsletters, books. As if I didn't have enough to do.

Desktop Publishing

No, I'm not dredging up the topic again. That's the name of a newsletter: Desktop Publishing, Bove and Rhodes' Inside Report (501 Second St., San Francisco, CA 94107, (415) 546-7722). Tony Bove and Cheryl Rhodes originally put out CP/M User's Guide, then they started a magazine called Desktop Publishing, which PCW Communications acquired and retitled Publish!. (Got that straight so far?) Tony and Cheryl have since started one of those high-cost, no-advertising newsletters that industries like ours seem to spawn. It contains all the latest news, gossip, rumors, and conjectures as to just what is happening in the desktop publishing world. It also has comments on new and existing products.

I've looked through all the issues put out so far (publication is monthly, and the newsletter started in September 1986). From

| Table 1: Benchmarks from product literature, comparing Levco's Prodigy Prime against MacMemory's TurboMax. The lower time for the Mac Plus/Whetstone benchmark is from MacMemory's literature; the higher from Levco's. |
|---|---|---|
| Mac Plus | TurboMax | Prodigy Prime |
| Sieve | 3.75 seconds | 1.82 seconds | 0.66 second |
| Dhrystone | 1900/second | 3246/second | 162 seconds |
| Whetstone | 6178/second | 3246/second | 612,244/second |
| RSG3 | 7273/second | 3754/second | 2.0 seconds |

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what I can see, Tony and Cheryl appear to be doing a solid job. Of course, it’s flavored with their own opinions and biases, but theirs are worth more than most folks—which is why people subscribe to newsletters like this. If you’re interested, you might call to see if such a promotion is in effect.

Radius Full Page Display
As mentioned, three different firms were showing large-screen displays for the Macintosh at MacExpo. One firm, Radius, was kind enough to lend me an FPD (Full Page Display) for a week, along with a Mac that already had the internal hardware hooked up. Within 24 hours, I was hooked.

The Radius FPD consists of two parts: a logic board that fits inside the Macintosh and a high-resolution monochrome CRT inside a beige display case. The logic board has 32K bytes of ROM—to help interface the FPD with the Mac—and 128K bytes of RAM—the actual video display memory. The connection port comes out through the “security port” (located on the back left edge of the Mac), so you don’t have to cut any holes in your case. A video cable from the CRT plugs into that port.

The CRT itself sits (usually) to the left of the Macintosh; the two units have a combined footprint 21 inches wide by 12 inches deep. The FPD has its own power supply, and there is a switched outlet in the back of the CRT so that you can plug your Mac into it, plug it into the wall, and turn your entire system on with one switch. The screen is designed to show a full 9½-by-11-inch page at a time. Resolution is 640 pixels per line by 864 lines, with 80 pixels per inch (as opposed to 72 pixels per inch on the Mac’s screen). The display is pleasant to look at and doesn’t have the flicker that the Macintosh does. Additionally, you can attach adjustable feet onto the bottom of the display so that you can tilt it to suit your fancy.

No special software is needed to use the FPD. Just boot your system as you would normally, and the desktop appears on the large CRT with the menu font automatically resized to 16 points for increased readability. The Mac’s screen is still active as well, allowing you to stick windows, desk accessories, and other items over there. A built-in “blanker” program automatically turns both screens off after a certain period of inactivity. All windows that appear have the little “full-size” icon in the upper left corner, allowing you to resize the window to the full FPD display with a single click, and a set of “shortcut” commands let you easily move and resize windows.

You can configure the FDP to suit your preferences. Just keep the mouse button pressed during boot-up, and a control panel appears, allowing you to adjust several parameters, including menu font size (12 or 16 points), arrow cursor size (the regular 16 by 16 or an enlarged 32 by 32), FPD placement (left or right side of the Mac), time delay for the automatic blanker (longer or shorter), relative vertical offset of the FPD and Mac displays (up or down), screen combinations (Mac alone, FPD alone, or both Mac and FPD), and full-size icons on all windows (enable or disable). The settings are saved in the Mac’s battery-backed parameter RAM, so that they are “remembered” from session to session.

I ran numerous applications on the Mac/FPD combination—which is what got me hooked. Many applications automatically recognized the larger display area and immediately opened any window to the full size available. That full size can make quite a difference. I used one compiler with the font set to 9-point Monaco; the editing window showed 70 lines of code at a time, as opposed to about 25 lines on a regular Mac screen. I was pleasantly surprised at how much easier it was to modify and debug continued
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**Zen and the Art of the Macintosh**

While wandering through MacWorld, I passed a retailing booth where numerous products were being hawked. Sitting quietly before the tables, autographing books, was a tall, thin, graying young man: Michael Green. I picked up a copy of his book, half-amused, half-annoyed at the title. After two minutes of browsing, I bought a copy, had Green sign it, chatted with him for a while, then walked away, tickled with my purchase and contemplating buying a few copies for friends.

**Zen and the Art of the Macintosh: Discoveries on the Path to Computer Enlightenment** (available at $16.95 from Running Press Book Publishers, 125 South 22nd St., Philadelphia, PA 19103) is to other computer books what the original Mac was to the rest of the computer industry. It charts Green’s discovery of the Mac, his thoughts as to its impact on the human spirit, and his struggles with being seduced by what he terms “the digital undertow.” He even talks about how he created the book itself:
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hardware, software, and techniques.

Intellectually, the book is stimulating. The title is a serious one, at least as serious as Zen ever is. The book itself, however, does not take itself or its subject too seriously. In it, Green mixes thoughts and ideas about Zen with discoveries about doing art on the Mac. The result provides a look at the Mac, and at computers in general, that is refreshing, enlightening, and entertaining.

Visually, the book is stunning. The emphasis is on design, layout, and ideas, with text as an important afterthought. I marvel at the amount of time each page must have taken to create and winces when I realize there are more than 230 pages. I wonder if Green winced as he walked around the show and saw the new large screens and software like Adobe Illustrator. Somehow, I doubt it; Green struck me as one who wastes little time regretting what is done.

Yes, you should buy it. It doesn’t cost that much ($16.95), and it’s worth it just to see what one person can do with a Macintosh. But it is much more than that. No, I am not a devotee of Zen, but that doesn’t lessen the book’s worth or impact. I pick it up a few times a day just to browse and find something new each time.

While talking with Green, he mentioned that he was supposed to give a talk later on the future of desktop publishing and that he was gleaming ideas to present. He looked at me, smiled, and said, “What do you think is the future of desktop publishing?” I held up his book and answered, “This.”

The Macintosh Bible

While we’re on the subject of “must buy” books for Macintosh owners, let’s look at The Macintosh Bible by Dale Coleman and Arthur Naiman (available at $21 from Goldstein and Blair, P.O. Box 7635, Berkeley, Ca 94707, (415) 524-4000). Simply put, it’s a compendium (400+ pages) of all those little bits and pieces of Macintosh lore that you tend to overlook in users group meetings or see posted on computer bulletin boards. For example, did you know that if you hold down the Option key when you launch the Font/DA Mover, it will come up prepared to transfer desk accessories instead of fonts? Did you know that Word supports soft hyphens? Did you know that printing documents that are more than 25 percent solid black can cause the print head on the original Imagewriter to overheat and fail?

Well, I didn’t either, and I’ve owned or been using a Macintosh for nearly three years. A lot of things I didn’t know because I just didn’t care (such as the nonstandard use of Command-Z in OverVue). But plenty of them are of great interest to me, and I’ve already picked up a number of shortcuts and techniques that I wish I had known about long ago.

Most notes in the book fall into eight basic categories, each indicated by an icon in the margin: very hot tips, important warnings, shortcuts, very good features, very bad features, bargains, things to come, and gossip/trivia. Not all items are so classified, but the icons help to flag those things you’ll be sure to want to read.

The book itself is organized into four parts. Part I, “Maximizing System Software and Utilities,” gives tips, hints, and warnings about the user interface, the operating system, and some of the more common system utilities (Font/DA Mover, Switcher, MiniFinder). Part II, “Maximizing Application Programs,” does the same for specific applications, like Word, He lix, MacPaint, Red Ryder, and ReadySetGo. Part III, “Maximizing Hardware,” talks mostly about printing, and there mostly about using the LaserWriter. Part IV, “Maximizing Your Purchases,” gives suggestions on how to get the most for your money and includes brief reviews of a long list of products. The three appendixes are almost worth the price of the book for

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Do I have any complaints about the book? Not really. There's plenty in here that I don't care about, but that's a reflection of how I use the Mac; others may find those sections invaluable.
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There are other programming charts as well. Two deal with BASIC: one is a general introduction, while the other is a detailed command listing for IBM and GW BASIC. The C reference card is an excellent single-card reference for the language and includes lists of commonly used functions and things to remember when programming in C.

The Algorithms card lists a number of handy routines (written in BASIC), including sorting, searching, and a nifty integer square root routine (which I discovered on this same chart years ago and used in the aforementioned game). There’s even a UNIX Shell reference card, based on the Bourne shell of UNIX System V (Release 2). Heaven knows I am not a great UNIX fan; this card should make my ever-increasing forays into that world easier to bear.

There are four more Micro Charts, none of which I’ve actually seen (but which are described on the brochure that accompanied the other cards). One covers 7400-series TTL pin-outs; another describes electronic components (e.g., diodes and transistors). Yet another, which looks intriguing, tells “how to generalize from a small sample,” something we all do anyway and could probably use some help with. The last is a reference card for WordStar.

The Micro Charts don’t replace a good book on the corresponding subject, but they’re a lot easier to use. They’re sturdy, too, and completely resistant to soft drinks, coffee, ketchup, grease, and other substances that programmers spill, drip, or smear while nourishing themselves late at night. Best of all, the charts are only $5.95 each. A minimum order from Micro Logic is two charts, but shipping and postage is only $1, regardless of the number of charts ordered. They even have a 14-day money-back guarantee.

The Hackers Corner

In the November 1984 BYTE, I wrote an article called “A Go Board for the Macintosh.” Go, for those of you unfamiliar with it, is a simple yet deep game that originated in China three or four millennia ago and remains extremely popular in the Far East. Two players alternate placing black and white stones on the intersections of a grid. Players can capture groups of enemy stones—an army—by covering all adjacent empty intersections with their own stones. When the game is over, the player who has the highest total of controlled territory and captured enemy stones wins.

My program, written in MacFORTH, was just what it professed to be: a go board allowing two players to carry on a game. I voiced ambitions of allowing the computer to play against humans, but I never pursued that to any degree. However, I still get letters from people interested in a go-playing program for the Macintosh.

As fate would have it, I ran into such a program right here at Brigham Young University. Jim Logan, who works for the electrical engineering department, has written a go-playing program for the Mac. It’s pretty good for a computer program, having placed fifth in the International Computer Go Tournament in Taiwan last November. And, currently at least, the price is right. It’s shareware.

Space won’t permit an exhaustive description here, but it has an excellent user interface and many, many options, including board size, search depth and width, move-numbering, infinite backtracking, analysis of the board and of individual armies while the game is in progress, and twiddling with the factors used to determine the computer’s next move. It plays the best game of go I’ve seen a computer play so far. I’m rusty enough that it keeps me on my toes; for a novice, it should be a challenging program.

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403 Clyde Building, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, (801) 378-3617. You can also contact him at loganj@byuvax.bitnet. He'll send you a disk with his current beta version. He's also selling the source code to an earlier (less intelligent) version. It's on disk and written in Megamax C; you can get that for $30. Oh, and Jim is looking for a dan-level player who's interested in working with him to make the game play better. You see, there's another international computer go tournament coming up soon.

In the Queue

I'm finishing this column up on a different computer than the one I started with. The column began on my old Compaq portable; it's being finished on an Access 386 system with a 16-MHz 80386 microprocessor, a 30-megabyte hard disk, an enhanced graphics adapter, and (only) 640K bytes of RAM. I could get used to something like this. A full report on this next month, along with a look at some of the MS-DOS software that I haven't been able (or willing) to wring out on my Compaq. Until then, see you on the bit stream.
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Requirements:
IBM PC/XT/AT or 100% Compatible • 256k to 640k • IBM DOS 2.1 or Higher 1 Floppy Drive • Hard Disk Drive (10 Megabytes Minimum) • Video Display Adapter IBM (Monochrome, Color, Enhanced Color), Hercules, AST (BOOKMARK occupies an equivalent space on hard disk as in system RAM plus video RAM)

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A year ago I had to beg for Macintosh software; nothing was happening, and I was overloaded with MS-DOS products. Then Apple introduced the Mac Plus, and the MS-DOS world began to freeze waiting for 386 machines, 286 operating systems, and rumored proprietary machines from IBM. The software scene suddenly reversed itself, and today I'm finding a flurry of activity in Macland and the drums in the PC arena. Life is like that, I guess.

**Serious Art**

A sophisticated art creation program for professional artists and designers who use the Macintosh, Illustrator (Adobe, $495) is far too powerful (and expensive) to be lumped in with the pack of drawing and painting programs that characterize the Mac art category. Let me emphasize the word “professional”—this product is not a toy for casual doodlers. Unfortunately, it is easier to demonstrate the program than it is to describe it, which often turns out to be the case with graphics tools.

In the simplest analysis, you create a line drawing that is stored as PostScript code rather than as a bit map of dots. The lines that make up the drawing can have thickness, or they can merely mark off regions that can be filled with gray tints. Because you’re dealing with PostScript, which is device-independent, the output on laser printers or typesetting devices is always crisp, smooth, and clean.

Illustrator gives you two planes of visual information. The top layer is your work area, on which you construct your image. The background layer is a template; you can use it to store a picture from another Mac graphics program or from an optical scanner. Thus, you can create a PostScript document that is essentially a tracing of a bit-map picture. But because PostScript works by defining lines as endpoints plus the straight lines or the Bezier curves that connect them, working with Illustrator is not as simple as drawing with MacPaint. You place endpoints on your screen, in connect-the-dots style, and Illustrator builds the curves between the endpoints. If you’ve got that, hang on, because the explanation gets trickier.

Bezier curves are determined by the starting point and two control points that lie on an imaginary line tangent to the curve. With Illustrator, you draw by placing the starting point, keeping the mouse button depressed, then moving the cursor along that tangent line to the control point in the direction the curve is heading. The angle at which the curve leaves the starting point is determined by the tangent line, the size of the curve is determined by the distance of the control points from the starting point. Since most smooth curves have control points equidistant from the starting point, Illustrator places the second control point for you; you can fine-tune the curve by moving either of the two control points.

Drawing with Illustrator is thus a choppy process of making straight lines that define curves. At first this is odd and downright annoying because you feel you’re working sidesaddle, but after some practice you get the hang of it, and it becomes second nature. Believe me, it’s not as difficult as it sounds.

The more complex your drawing, the more points you have to set, so a detailed illustration entails a lot of work. The art produced by Illustrator is precise and stylized. Illustrator seems best for projects that should look polished and designed rather than loose and spontaneous—corporate logos, posters, technical drawings, borders, art deco images, and so on. You wouldn’t want to use it to produce a simulated crayon sketch; I shudder to think of the amount of labor necessary to create an image with all of the irregularities of freehand art.

You can also use Illustrator to perform one-shot modifications to PostScript typefaces. For example, you could create an elongated gray shadow for a display headline. Illustrator and PostScript together understand how to download a font to the output device and then play with the PostScript outline that defines the letters, but that’s beyond my scope here.

Files can be stored in any of three formats. Encapsulated PostScript provides both the code and a bit-map image that can be used by a program (a page layout package, say) that understands the format. Although Illustrator is a Macintosh product, it can generate Encapsulated PostScript in both Macintosh and MS-DOS forms. Or you can save a file as pure ASCII PostScript, which you can then edit, import into an application with a PostScript interface, dump directly to a laser printer, or even send out over an electronic mail service without having to worry about binary file hassles.

Documentation is well written and helpful. Adobe has included a demonstration of the program on videocassette as part of the package, which is a brilliant idea.

This is a very important program, but even a simple drawing can consume a lot of time. I wouldn’t suggest Illustrator to anyone who doesn’t fully understand its ramifications and isn’t willing to dedicate many hours to the product.

**Serious Type**

While on the subject of Bezier curves, it’s time to make a brief nod in the direction continued

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_Ezra Shapiro_ is a consulting editor for _BYTE_. Contact him at P.O. Box 170040, San Francisco, CA 94117. Because of the volume of mail he receives, Ezra, regretfully, cannot respond to each inquiry.

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of Fontographer (Altsys, $395), a typeface design program that works much like Illustrator. There are some differences, though. Fontographer places both control points for you, which you can adjust later, so you don’t have to draw those choppy lines. You are, however, still playing connect the dots. Fontographer also differentiates between straight lines and curves (Illustrator defines a straight line as a flat curve, with both control points located on top of the starting point), so you have an additional tool for making straight lines. Fontographer generates downloadable fonts rather than ASCII PostScript.

The two programs complement each other nicely; reading the documentation for both products gave me a much clearer understanding of PostScript and Bézier curves than I would have had if I had read only one manual. The interface is similar enough so you can move from one program to the other with little disorientation. Both work well with scanned images as templates.

It’s a lot of work to create a new alphabet. Jim Von Ehr of Altsys tells me that many of his customers use the product to create typefaces that contain only a handful of letters, for corporate identification and logos. But some type designers are working with the product, and designing a whole new typeface that looks really good is incredibly rewarding.

Along with Fontographer, you get a special copy of FONTastic, the company’s Macintosh font editor, for creating Mac bit-map fonts. Don’t assume you can move from the laser font to the bit-map font with no real effort; it takes almost as much work to develop a good bit-map font as it does to produce the downloadable version. You’ll spend quite a while tweaking.

I love this program, but I also love type. Whether you need the program for professional uses, or you want to make typeface design a hobby, expect to block out a big chunk of your life for playing with Fontographer. I think it’s worth it, and the program is outstanding, but it’s not for everyone.

Hot Tip
I don’t really appreciate phone dialers—my fingers do the job just fine, thank you—but Hotline (General Information, $39.95) is the Cadillac of the category. It’s not the dialing that attracts me; it’s the built-in phone directory. Hotline comes with a 2000-entry subset of the company’s National Directory of Addresses and Telephone Numbers, a mammoth compendium of every useful number you could ever want—some 150,000 of them. While 2000 numbers doesn’t seem like a lot (there are several hundred per page in the book your phone company gives you), these numbers are prime. (Sorry, I couldn’t resist.) Major corporations, government agencies, freight companies, airlines, hotels, publications, computer hardware and software firms . . . the list goes on. Even if you don’t use the program to actually dial your telephone, I guarantee you’ll use the database within the first day you have the package, if not within the first hour.

As for the program, it’s an MS-DOS terminate-and-stay-resident program that allows fast searching of both the National Directory and a personal directory of 65,000 of your closest friends. It also keeps track of local time for each of the numbers, and, if you like, Hotline will generate an ASCII log of the calls you make, showing number, company, location, and time. You can cut and paste from the log into your major application. You can look up the area code or country code and local time for more than 3000 cities around the world. The databases can be dumped in standard delimited for-
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For IBM PCs

Instead of displaying a grid of cells, Trapeze gives you a blank screen: you create blocks of data where you want them.

Trapeze is inexpensive, slick, and well built. For anyone (like myself) who still scrubs phone numbers on odd scraps of paper, this program might finally be enough incentive to get the numbers into the computer. If I gave out stars, Hotline would get a bunch.

Hotline is inexpensive, slick, and well built. For anyone (like myself) who still scrubs phone numbers on odd scraps of paper, this program might finally be enough incentive to get the numbers into the computer. If I gave out stars, Hotline would get a bunch.

Without a Net

Once you get past the silliness of the user interface, Trapeze (Data Tailor, $295) is really quite an interesting product for the Macintosh. It’s easiest to describe it as an unusual and capable spreadsheet program with powerful output formatting, but that doesn’t really cover it. Trapeze is unlike any spreadsheet I’ve seen.

Rather than presenting you with the familiar grid of cells, Trapeze gives you a blank screen and lets you create blocks of data in a way that’s reminiscent of a painting process. You start with a blank screen—a sort of masterpiece waiting to be filled in with entries and relationships.

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data wherever you want them. Each block can contain only one type of item (numbers, formulas, text, imported graphics, or charts).

To build an elementary worksheet—labels on top and left edges, totals on the right and along the bottom, and data cells in the middle—you'd actually have to construct five blocks, one each for the two sets of labels, one each for the totals, and one for the raw data. Blocks can reference each other, but you don't use the two sets of labels, one each for the totals, constructs five blocks, one each for the formulas, text, imported graphics, and one for the raw data. Blocks can reference each other, but you don't use the traditional row-and-column numbering system; you use names you've given blocks and constants. So to build your bottom strip of totals, you'd simply enter the formula `sum(blockname, # col)`. This sounds cumbersome if all you want to do is set up a simple table, but if you're looking for fancy reports or self-calculating forms, this works nicely.

You can drop interesting fonts or spiffy graphics all over the place for impressive forms design, and the spreadsheet has one of the longest lists of functions I've ever seen.

I'm tempted to go easy on Trapeze because I really want a program like this to be part of my day-to-day toolbox and because I think its authors ought to be encouraged to make it a solid piece of software. However, I was not particularly pleased when I worked with it. As long as I did things by the book, I didn't have any problems. But when I intentionally did stupid things, all hell broke loose.

For example, I filled a large block of cells with integers, then (illegally) entered a formula in one cell that summed the block as columns, including itself. That's a classic circular reference, and it should have set off alarms and angry dialog boxes. Once, only once, I got a circular reference error message and blew up the screen display. Another time, I simply got an `#NA` error constant in a solitary cell; the original grid had vanished. Other times, I got the message but Trapeze proceeded to calculate anyway and collapsed the block to a single row that summed all the valid numbers in the columns I'd entered; I couldn't figure out how to get back to the original grid from that point. The most common response was no message at all, followed by a quick snap down to that single row. Every so often, the display would show a black block, as if a cell were selected, in my starting position, only by then that spot had ceased to be a cell. I honestly tried this lots of times to see if I could get a documentable bug nailed down, but the results were unpredictable. The critical factors seemed to be whether I had linked another block to the first and how many times I'd gone back and forth.

Note that not only was this a finished, shrink-wrapped product, but Data Tailor had even sent me two new program disks that allegedly corrected unspecified bugs. Also note that I don't care if my misadventures were a result of flaws in the software or my unfamiliarity with the product. Programs shouldn't have bugs, and they should also be prepared to deal with idiots at the keyboard.

I'm curious to see if this sort of thing gets fixed and, if so, how the program handles it. If I'm going to trash a worksheet with one rotten formula, I'd at least like a warning and a chance to back out before an automatic recalculation blows away hours of work.

Now, about that interface: Trapeze is a good argument against getting too carried away with the Macintosh icon-and-mouse disease. You can enter a formula by typing in text, which is simple enough, but if you want to take the Macintosh route and do it all with the mouse, here's what you have to do: There's a bar of four cryptic icons in the upper left corner of the screen. To get to the enter formula icon (a box with two parallel lines inside it; an
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Mailbag
I recently received a letter from David Dunham, author of Acta (the Macintosh outliner), taking issue with my brief comments about that program in my February

continued
Print Master from BayTech is an intelligent printer controller that connects between your computers and printers. It allows you to share one printer automatically, or switch between several printers by sending a simple code, not by changing cables. Print Master's generous built-in buffer spools data until your printers can receive it. Because Print Master is a very flexible device, you can set it up to fit your application, even if your application changes.

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If several users are sharing one printer, printer sharing via Print Master is completely automatic. There are no codes to send. You simply perform your normal print operation. If you are sharing several identical printers, connection is also automatic. Again, you perform your normal print operation and are connected to the next available printer on a first-come-first-serve basis. Print Master will send data to all printers simultaneously to keep your printers running at full capacity. If you are sharing several different printers, such as a laser-jet, a dot matrix and a plotter, and you wish to select a specific printer, you perform your normal print routine and then send a printer select code (which you can define yourself) before the first characters of your data. The data is then routed to the selected printer. It's that easy.

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column. After chatting with him on the phone, I realized that some clarification is in order. The subsequent paragraphs start with Mr. Dunham's comments in quotes; my reactions follow.

"Acta is not really to the Mac as Ready! is to MS-DOS. It is not a stripped-down version of a larger program." Well, Acta is a Mac disk accessory, and Ready! is an MS-DOS terminate-and-stay-resident program, so there is a rough equivalence. And I enjoy using Ready!, so I thought the comparison was complimentary. I don't think of Ready! as a stripped-down version of ThinkTank on the IBM PC; although Ready! lacks a paragraph editor, it has a number of features I'd like to see added to ThinkTank. But whether Ready! is stripped down or fattened up is not really germane to Acta; this is a cheap shot from Mr. Dunham. Both Ready! and Acta are useful tools in their respective environments, and I wouldn't want to be without either.

"This leads me to my second point; [Acta] can be compared with stand-alone programs." True. I yield to Mr. Dunham on this point. Acta is a good program, and it can be used in any situation where an outliner is helpful.

Mr. Dunham then goes on to say, "...when the article was written, neither ThinkTank [512] nor More had the standard Macintosh Undo." Also true. Acta does have this feature, and it was added to More only with the upgrade to 1.1. However, since More now has an Undo, Mr. Dunham gets points only for being there first.

"Acta lets you paste pictures from the clipboard; ThinkTank pastes only the entire Scrapbook." I wasn't aware of this, and Living Videotext says it isn't true. I'd check ThinkTank if I had it around anywhere, but I've moved on to More.

"Acta allows an arbitrary amount of text in a topic; ThinkTank and More force you to use separate "windows" if your topic gets too long." I'm assuming that by "topic," Mr. Dunham means "item" or "entry" rather than "file." In that case, he's correct. With Acta, you can type away merrily to your heart's content; the Living Videotext outliners restrict headlines to one line and require you to use a document editor for any sort of long text chunk. So Acta is more "modeless" than ThinkTank and More. But I don't know whether this is better or merely a difference in philosophy. Hitting a carriage return starts a new headline in the Living Videotext products; in Acta, you have to use a command-key combination.

"Admittedly, ThinkTank can do slide shows." Yes, but who cares? The fact that Acta can't do slide shows doesn't strike me as a big failing.

"And [ThinkTank] can print, which the version of Acta you reviewed couldn't (Acta 1.2, a free upgrade, prints to Imagewriter or LaserWriter)." Noted. The ability to print is a major improvement to Acta, which makes it a much better product.

"Another comment was about the lack of formatting. Considering that Acta gives you more flexible formatting than ThinkTank or More (and that Word 3.0 is still nowhere to be seen), I don't think this is a fair comment (even if it is valid for a wish list)." If all he means by "formatting" is "mucking about with typefaces," Mr. Dunham is correct. I have often been annoyed with the blandness of the Living Videotext environment. However, I used the term more broadly, meaning "preparing text for presentation." Since Acta can't do headers, footers, page numbers, tables of contents, and all that sort of stuff, I think it's limited compared to the stand-alone products.

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listic variations, or else Acta would support it.” True again; my major gripe is with the Apple operating system. However, this does lend weight to my conclusion that if you want to prepare documents with Acta, you’ll probably want to massage them with a word processor.

“One correction is not, however. Acta has a retail price of $59.95, not $79.95.” Whoops. I blew it. Sorry about that. ☹
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If a curve $C_1$ rolls without slipping along another curve $C_2$, any fixed point on $C_1$ traces a path called a *roulette*. One of the simplest of these is the cycloid, formed when $C_1$ is a circle and $C_2$ is a straight line. For every rotation of the circle, a cycloidal arch is formed, as shown in figure 1a.

Galileo is credited with naming this curve. He conjectured that the area under one arch is exactly three times the area of the generating circle. In the early 1630s, Gilles Personne de Roberval proved this to be true.

Another interesting property is that the length of one cycloidal arch is exactly four times the diameter of the generating circle; that is, the length of one arch equals the perimeter of the square circumscribed about the circle. For a thorough treatment of the cycloid, I recommend Martin Gardner’s excellent *Sixth Book of Mathematical Games from Scientific American* (W. H. Freeman & Co., 1963).

We can expand the realm of cycloids by moving the point off the circle’s circumference. If the point is fixed inside the circle, we get a curtate cycloid; an exterior fixed point results in a prolate cycloid (see figures 1b and 1c).

Rolling a circle inside another circle rather than along a straight line produces a hypocycloid. The number of points, or *cusps*, is determined by the ratio of two circles’ radii. A fixed-circle radius that is four times the rolling-circle radius produces an astroid, that is, a hypocycloid of four cusps (see figure 1d). As was the case before, moving the point away from the rolling circle’s circumference produces prolate and curtate versions of the hypocycloid.

Now consider a circle rolling around the outside of the fixed circle. The fixed point traces an epicycloid in this case. When both circles have the same radius, the curve is the familiar cardioid—a cycloid that has been bent around another circle (see figure 1e). Curtate and prolate varieties apply here, as well.

The upside-down, or inverted, cycloid has remarkable properties. Consider two points $A$ and $B$ on a ramp, with $A$ to the side of and slightly above $B$ (see figure 2). A marble released at point $A$ will travel to point $B$ by the force of gravity. The shape of the path between those points determines how long the marble takes to reach $B$. If you construct ramps of varying shapes and conduct marble races from $A$ to $B$, you will find that a cycloidal ramp gives the shortest time. This is true even if the marble has to go uphill part of the way to reach $B$. The inverted cycloid is thus known as a curve of quickest descent, a *brachistochrone*. Johann Bernoulli’s proof of this property is found in *What Is Mathematics*? by Richard Courant and Herbert Robbins (Oxford University Press, 1941).

The inverted cycloid is also a curve of equal descent, an *isochrone* or *tautochrone*. A marble will always take the same amount of time to reach the bottom of a cycloidal ramp, regardless of its starting point.

The Dutch physicist Christian Huygens discovered this property in 1657, which led him to study the possibility of developing a perfect pendulum clock. If a pendulum could swing in a cycloidal rather than a circular arc, its period would be constant regardless of the amplitude of the swing. Huygens attempted such a design, using a flexible pendulum arm (string) and a pair of cycloidal “bumpers” flanking the pivot. However, the resulting friction made the clock even more inaccurate than the circular-arc pendulum, so it had to be abandoned.

What about the error of a circular arc? For relatively small amplitudes, the circular arc is sufficiently accurate, due to the approximation $\sin \theta \approx \theta$ for small $\theta$, measured in radians.

**Programming Cycloids**

Before the advent of affordable computer graphics, we could only read about these mathematical curves and admire them. Now, with a little programming, we can create curves of our own and experiment with them endlessly.

The programs in this article are all written for an IBM PC with BASIC or GW BASIC. A graphics adapter is also required. However, if your computer has some other version of BASIC with similar graphics capabilities, you shouldn’t have much trouble modifying the graphics commands. The remarks in the listings will help in the translation.

The program in listing 1 graphs two complete arches of a cycloid. You specify the location of the fixed point, or pen (as it is referred to in the program), with respect to a circle of radius 1. For example, a pen location of 1.2 places the pen 1.2 units away from the rolling circle’s center. However, when the curve is drawn on the screen, these distances are scaled up as large as possible without exceeding the screen size.

The programs in listings 2 and 3 let you explore hypocycloids and epicycloids, respectively. In addition to setting the pen location, you specify the ratio of the fixed circle to the rolling circle. A value of 1 makes the two circles equal; a value less than 1 makes the fixed circle smaller than the rolling circle; and a value greater than 1 makes the fixed circle larger than the rolling circle.

Note that ratios larger than 1 need not be integral. For instance, a ratio of 3.5 is allowed; it produces a curve that closes...
(begins repeating) only after two revolu-
tions and seven cusps. In general, if the
decimal ratio is restated as a quotient min
in lowest terms, the rolling circle will
make \( n \) revolutions and produce \( m \) cusps.
In theory, an irrational number produces
a curve that never closes. However, be-
cause my computer says that \( \sqrt{2} \) is
1.4142356, I anticipate a curve that
closes after some 25 million revolutions
with more than 35 million cusps.
In all three listings, the program plots
100 points per revolution. You can in-
crease the number of points for a better-
looking curve, but this will slow down the
drawing process proportionately.
Any standard calculus text should pro-
vide derivations of the equations used in
these programs.

Beyond Cycloids
Kenner Industries makes a design toy
called Spirograph. The set includes a col-

Figure 2: An inverted cycloid defines
the path of quickest descent and the path
of equal descent.

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The function keys make it easy to create a interpreter.

environment that's more elegant than other C compilers. In fact, it's the only full featured C compiler that can operated comfortably on floppy diskettes. As you would expect, MIX C is easy to use. It produces a complete program listing with compile errors clearly identified and explained. If you've been frustrated by other C compilers, don't throw in the towel until you've tried ours. There's a big difference.

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Listing 1: The BASIC program to graph cycloids.

```
100 KEY OFF ' Turn off key labels
110 DEF FNMAX(A,B)=-(A>B)*A-(B>A)B ' Maximum of A and B
120 WD=319 'Width of screen
130 HT=199 'Height of screen
140 PI=3.1415926#
150 'Get parameters
160 SCREEN 0,1: WIDTH 80: CLS
170 PRINT "Draw a cycloid"
190 PRINT "Enter the pen position w.r.t. a circle of radius 1."
200 PRINT "<1 is inside, =1 is on circle, >1 is outside"
210 INPUT "Pen position (-1 to quit)"; H
220 IF H<0 THEN END
230 'Distinguish between curtate and prolate cycloids
250 IF H<1 THEN TN=1: TH=0: COTO 290 ' Curtate
270 'Scale the units
280 A=WD/(4*PI+2*TN-2*TH) ' Radius of circle
300 X0=HT—FNMAX(A,H) ' X— and Y— origin
320 'Set up the screen
340 SCREEN 1,1 ' 320 x 200 graphics
350 LINE(X0,0)—(X0,HT),2 ' X—axis in color 2
360 LINE(0,Y0)—(WD,Y0),2 ' Y—axis in color 2
370 CIRCLE(X0,Y0—A),A,3 ' Circle at origin (color 3)
380 CIRCLE(X0+2*PI*A,Y0—A),A,3 ' Circle at 1 rev.
390 CIRCLE(X0+4*PI*A,Y0—A),A,3 ' Circle at 2 rev.
400 PSET(X0,Y0—A),3 ' Mark center of each circle
410 PSET(X0+2*PI*A,Y0—A),3
420 PSET(X0+4*PI*A,Y0—A),3
430 'Graph the cycloid
450 FOR ANG=0 TO 4*PI STEP 2*PI/100 ' 100 points/arc
460 X=X0+A*ANG—H*SIN(ANG)
470 Y=Y0—H*CO(ANG)
480 IF Y<0 OR Y>HT THEN 500
490 PSET(X,Y),1
500 NEXT ANG
510 'Hold until a key is pressed.
520 IF INKEYW" THEN 520
530 GOTO 170
```

Listing 2: The BASIC program to graph hypocycloids.

```
100 KEY OFF
110 WD=319: HT=199
120 X0=WD/2: Y0=HT/2
130 PI=3.1415926#
140 'Get parameters
150 'Get parameters
160 SCREEN 0,1: WIDTH 80: CLS
170 PRINT "Draw a hypocycloid"
180 INPUT "Ratio of fixed to rolling circle ( >1 )": R
190 IF R<1 THEN END
200 PRINT "Enter pen position w.r.t. a circle of radius 1."
210 PRINT "<1 is inside, =1 is on circle, >1 is outside"
220 INPUT "Pen position (-1 to quit)"; H
230 IF H<0 THEN END
240 IF H<1 THEN A=R*HT: GOTO 260
250 A=5*R*HT/(R+H-1)
```

continued
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MATHEMATICAL RECREATIONS 

Listing 3: The BASIC program to graph epicycloids.

100 KEY OFF
110 WD=319: HT=199
120 X0=WD/2: Y0=HT/2
130 PI=3.1415926#
140 SCREEN 0,1: WIDTH 80: CLS
150 ' 
160 PRINT "Draw an epicycloid"
170 INPUT "Ratio of fixed to rolling circle (0=quit)"; R
180 IF R=0 THEN END
190 PRINT "Enter pen position w.r.t. a circle of radius 1."
200 PRINT "<1 is inside, =1 is on circle, >1 is outside"
210 INPUT "Pen position (<=0 to quit)"; H
220 IF H<=0 THEN END
230 A=.5*R*HT/(R+H+1)
240 B=A/R
250 H=H*8
260 'Set up screen
270 SCREEN 1,1: CLS '320 x 200 graphics
280 LINE(X0,0)-(X0,HT),2 'X—scale, color 2
290 LINE(0,Y0)-(WD,Y0),2 'Y—scale, color 3
300 CIRCLE(X0,Y0),A,3 'Fixed circle, color 3
310 CIRCLE(X0+A+B,Y0),B,3 'Rolling circle, initial pos.
320 CIRCLE(X0+A-B,Y0),A,3 'Fixed circle, color 3
330 CIRCLE(X0+A-B,Y0),B,3 'Rolling circle, initial pos.
340 'Hypocycloid
350 ANG=0 'Initial value
360 ANG=ANG+2*PI/100 '100 points per rev.
370 X=X0+(A-B)*COS(ANG)+H*COS(ANG*(A+B)/B)
380 Y=Y0-(A-B)*SIN(ANG)+H*SIN(ANG*(A+B)/B)
390 PSET(X,Y),1
400 ' 
410 'Keep drawing until a key is pressed.
420 IF INKEY$<>"" THEN 160 ELSE 380

It should be possible to use a computer to simulate these beautiful roulettes on a computer, as long as the track and the wheel can be specified mathematically. I encourage you to explore this problem, but beware: The math required is considerably more advanced than what we've used in this article. (If truth be known, the author hasn't programmed this one yet.) 

Your comments are welcome.
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### PRINTERS

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE THAT MEANS BUSINESS.
Computer Tragedies

Dear Jerry,

One of your columns long ago gave me the impression that you were interested in stories of computer programming errors that caused spectacular, or at least serious, failures. Another person who is interested in this is Gerald M. Weinberg (The Psychology of Computer Programming, which I highly recommend, and Introduction to General Systems Thinking, in which I haven't gotten past page 42). Gerry gave the closing address at the Human Factors in Computer Systems conference in Gaithersburg, Maryland, in March 1982. Unfortunately the talk was not recorded or published, as far as I know.

In the talk, Weinberg said that he was collecting stories of people who were killed or seriously hurt because of programming errors. I don't recall that he had any to tell, but I may be wrong. Apparently the following story didn't meet his criteria:

A boy had been arrested a few months earlier, then gotten out and gone straight. He was stopped for a minor traffic violation, and the police officer radioed in for information. The operator inquired from the central computer system, got the code WC, which meant "Arrest Warrant Cleared," and translated it to the officer as "Warrant Current." The officer, obeying what he thought was good information, pulled the boy in. The boy, in despair at ever getting clear of the system, hanged himself. His parents and the press were highly upset.

I found Gerry Weinberg to be a very interesting and interested person, and I think there could be an interesting tale or two if the two of you were to get together. (If you do, I'd appreciate hearing about it.) His address is RR #2, Lincoln, NE 68520-9417.

Pat McGee
Chimayo, NM

I hadn't heard of this project, but I suspect a great number of BYTE readers will have stories.

In thinking about the incident of the young man who hanged himself, I wonder, on the other hand, how many potential victims have been saved because the police were able to find out that someone picked up on a traffic charge was wanted for a serious crime or a jail break? Nothing, I fear, is 100 percent safe from tragic consequences.—Jerry

Two-in-One Drive

Dear Jerry,

In a recent column, you expressed surprise that the AT&T PC 6300 Plus thought floppy drive A was both drive A and drive B. This is not unique to this machine. Most (if not all) MS-DOS machines with a single floppy disk drive work this way.

The DISKCOPY command can be used to copy a disk in drive A to another disk, also in drive A. DOS prompts you at appropriate times to place first the source disk, then the target disk, into drive A. However, if you wish to use the COPY command so that only certain files will be transferred, or so you can add files to a disk already in use, trying to COPY from A to A will result in a message telling you that a file cannot be copied to itself. Instead, you must use the COPY command to copy from drive A to drive B (or vice versa). You will be prompted for a disk swap as each file is copied. Granted, this involves a lot of disk swapping if several files are being copied, but it beats not being able to copy them at all, if all you have is a single-floppy machine.

I really enjoy puttering with new software and hardware, so I find the tales of your experiences quite entertaining.

Elizabeth A. Swoope
Baton Rouge, LA

Thanks. I should have figured it out, and of course, not long after I wrote that column, I did. My Zenith Z-248 works the same way: one physical floppy that can be two logical drives.

I'll continue puttering, and thanks for writing.—Jerry

Uncramming RAM

Dear Jerry,

In a recent column, you described a problem with the loading and unloading of RAM-resident programs under MS-DOS, better known as "RAM Cram." I would like to point you in the direction of two products that may solve your problems.

The first is Referee by Persoft, of Madison, Wisconsin. Its advertisement indicates that it selectively loads and unloads RAM-resident programs as you desire for each application program. This one sounds like it does exactly what you want. The price is $69.95.

The second program is Software Carousel, by SoftLogic Solutions in Manchester, New Hampshire. This package is a TopView-type program that allows up to 10 different tasks to be loaded simultaneously (not multitasking); each task can have its own set of RAM-resident programs loaded. An EMS card or large hard disk is really needed for this one to store the suspended tasks. The price of this package is $59.95.

You could probably con a copy of each of these products, given your persuasive abilities. I haven't tried them, so I can't attest to their quality. Happy computing.

Gary R. Saake
Aurora, IL

Spellbinder

Dear Jerry,

I have a fantastic word processor that I heard of years ago from two old pros who made their living doing technical writing. The program handles files up to disk size. It is available for CP/M-80, CP/M-86, or MS-DOS, and has a powerful command and macro capability, including global search and replace (which searches an entire file, larger than computer memory, with automatic or optional replace). It has lots of other great features, including proportional printing. And it represents a single system to learn that works on either CP/M or PC-DOS machines.

The program is Spellbinder, produced by Lexisoft, P.O. Box 1950, Davis, CA 95617, (916) 758-3630.

Spellbinder is easy to use. While I never could figure out WordStar, Spellbinder gave me great results from the beginning. I think you'd like it.

Robert A. Darrow
Sunnyvale, CA

— Inquiry 197

Conducted by Jerry Pournelle
I have heard good stuff about Spellbinder. At every computer show, I go to Lexisoft's booth. They take my card and swear they will send me a copy. So far, I have yet to see one.

I can only write about what is here, alas. — Jerry

Modula-2 for the Amiga
Dear Jerry,

Since purchasing my Amiga I have been using Amiga BASIC, but I would like to move up to something with a more structured and powerful high-level language. My two choices would seem to be a C compiler or Modula-2.

C language is very "hot" now, especially with the Amiga, since its operating system was written in C. In addition, the examples in the ROM Kernel Manual are written in C.

Modula-2 got my attention with a relatively low price and what seems to be an easier-to-decipher code. At present, the Modula-2 compiler from TDI Software of Dallas, Texas, is the only one commercially available for the Amiga. But I hear the TDI Modula-2 compiler has several deviations from standard Modula-2.

There is another Modula-2 being developed by a student (or students) of Professor Niklaus Wirth in Switzerland. Do you think it might be wise to wait for the new compiler because of the deviations by TDI?

Earl Davis
Marion, OH

TDI Modula-2 works. It has some misfeatures, but they keep improving it. I wouldn't wait for ETH (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) to deliver a commercial product; once they're through, someone else usually has to polish it into something usable.

And I continue to believe that Modula-2 is the right language for a great many jobs. — Jerry

Can't BIX
Dear Jerry,

Picture a child from a poor family, in front of a toy store. He stands in the snow, looking through the window at all the wonderful things that he wants but can't have. He can only imagine the fun of playing baseball with a real bat, or the sound of the toy train whistle. He is sad.

I, too, am sad. I read the "Best of BIX," and realize how much lies beyond what will fit in the monthly section. I imagine what it would be like to converse electronically or exchange BIX mail with authors and editors of BYTE, perhaps even your esteemed self. I contemplate what I could do with some of the software downloadable from the libraries, and the many other benefits of joining BIX. I have a computer, modem, and Red Ryder, and can write procedure files to skin porcupines. But alas, BIX is out of my reach for the foreseeable future, because I have neither Visa nor MasterCard.

I wonder how many others are in the same position. Because we don't buy with plastic, we don't exist as far as BIX is concerned. There certainly are other services available that make no such requirement; GEnie, for example, transfers its payments out of my checking account, and other systems require a deposit. Why couldn't BIX do something similar?

"Since when," you may ask, "is this my problem?" It isn't your problem, but computer-assisted conferencing is certainly one of your interests, and since your piece in the December 1986 BYTE described BIX as "the first step into what will be the normal communications pattern of the future," yours was the first name I thought of.

I hope that the "pattern of the future" doesn't exclude us non-Visa-cardholders; after all, the good that a person can derive...
"A successful business runs on accurate, timely information." An obvious statement perhaps, but one that every personal computer user must keep in mind. In order to get the reports we require, we must ensure that the information on which we base our decisions is as up-to-date as possible. This is where a bar code reading system such as the TimeWand can be used to improve efficiency in the office or workshop. The TimeWand provides a convenient way to ensure that your computer has all the facts, all the time.

Let's use inventory control as an example. Once an inventory system is set up on the computer, you are faced with the important task of keeping the inventory up to date. The TimeWand gives you a quick and efficient method of getting information into your computer system. To enter an item into inventory (such as the copper elbows shown above), all you need to do is scan the item, the quantity, and transfer the data to your computer. By using TimeWand, you bypass the time-consuming steps of writing down every transaction, deciphering hand-written notes, typing in each inventory transaction by hand, and searching for transcription errors that might have occurred. The TimeWand is an ideal tool for gathering information for use in your business.

From time-billing to tracking work orders to monitoring security, the TimeWand provides an inexpensive solution for your data collection needs. Call or write Videx today for more information about how the TimeWand can help in your business.

TimeWand (2K version) - $198
Recharger - $149
TimeWand Communication Software (IBM) - $299

Software available for the Macintosh, Apple // family, and Tandy (Model 100 and 200).

Videx is a registered trademark and TimeWand is a trademark of Videx, Inc.
from, or contribute to, such a forum is not a function of his credit rating. Perhaps you might plead our case with the BIX powers-that-be, or at least pass this letter on to them.

See you on BIX? Someday, I hope.
Lyle D. Gunderson
Pleasant Grove, UT

I believe the BYTE/BIX people are trying to come up with an alternative to MasterCard/Visa for BIX, but it’s a problem. How can they check the credit of an applicant? And if asked to prepay, how many applicants will do it?

BIX authorities are looking into bank transfers, and I’ll certainly remind them that it’s possible. — Jerry

Advertising for Europeans
Dear Jerry,
Small U.S. high-tech companies are not achieving their full market potential in Europe. As an American engineer living in Europe, I’d like to give some often-overlooked facts about commerce here.

1. 800 telephone numbers are not accessible outside the U.S. Always include your local number and area code in your advertisements.

2. Always give a full postal address in your ads. This is true even if your ad includes postcard response forms; all too often these disappear or expire before the ad reaches a potential customer. Without an address, written inquiries are nipped in the bud.

3. Accept Visa or equivalent cards as payment. I could write a whole letter about the frustration and cost of transferring funds through “friendly” banks.

4. Respond properly to inquiries. Obviously, to make a sale you must tell the potential buyer about the product. At the minimum, send data sheets and price lists plus shipping costs. Also include information about your other products, even those coming out Real Soon Now. Do it via airmail; regular mail can take three months to arrive.

5. Ship purchases by UPS or DHL. Although such services may not do all they claim to do, especially in a foreign country, they do try harder. Many of today’s national postal services are early retirement homes.

6. Package your product to withstand a herd of stampeding elephants. A Fragile sticker won’t work as a shock absorber.

7. Put several copies of shipping documents in an envelope on the outside of the package. Customs officers need to know the package’s contents and its value. Otherwise, they can’t deliver it.

8. Tax structures vary a great deal. Itemize and specify a value for each type of product. For example, books, software, and hardware all have different import duties here in Norway. Splitting the total may save the customer some money.

9. We use 220-VAC 50-Hz power here. (The Japanese are responsive to this fact, even if you’re not.) Design with a selectable power transformer and a three-prong removable power cord, so we can put on the right power cord to match the wall sockets here.

10. Local representatives can be invaluable—but not if they can’t carry on a technical conversation about your product, and not if they’re tripling your prices. Choose judiciously.

Bob Clarke
Larvik, Norway

Thanks for the tips. Maybe someone is reading this. — Jerry

Couch Computing
Dear Jerry,
I’ve followed with interest your search for the perfect writing system. I’m a writer of software and prose myself, and I have a system that may appeal to you.

A couple of years ago I was thinking how nice it would be to be able to write without leaving my comfy spot on the couch. I figured what I’d need would be a remote control keyboard and a large remote control TV set/RGB monitor. I found both, a Cherry keyboard and a Mitsubishi TV/monitor.

The keyboard isn’t my favorite, but I haven’t seen another I can use from five feet away. Better hurry if you want one—I believe I recently saw them being dumped for $69 in the back of BYTE.

Mark McWiggins
Seattle, WA

Sounds interesting. Actually, though, I have about 10 feet of cable on my wonderful (but no longer obtainable) Archive keyboard that works with Zeke II, the ancient CompuPro Z80 I do most of my writing on. I presume I could curl up on a couch with it, since my 15-inch Hitachi monitor is plenty big enough to see from a goodly distance.

Somewhat, though, I’ve never been tempted. I learned to type sitting reasonably erect, and since I type all day I think I’d have real back problems if I didn’t.

Incidentally, my Archive keyboard has Hall-effect keys. They are nearly indestructible, and the action is wonderful. Alas, I think no one makes a keyboard with Hall-effect any longer.—Jerry

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Bill is a pro. He stays current with new developments in the micro industry by reading BYTE, the magazine for the "Power Reader." BYTE readers have tremendous clout due to their broad-based technical expertise. About 90% of BYTE subscribers buy or influence their company's purchases of software, hardware and peripherals.
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In terms of buying influence, our “Bill Sundberg” typifies the average BYTE reader with a technical job title, according to the 1986 Hardware Purchasing Influence Study and the 1987 Software Purchasing Influence Study. Results of these research studies are available from your BYTE Advertising Sales Consultant.

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AMIGA

This month's Amiga section includes three threads. We start off with a thread on installing an 80-track drive on an Amiga, forge on to the problems of a BIXer with a flaky system, and finish up with a thorough look at the ins and outs of the Amiga's Auto-Configuration RAM.

INSTALLING AN 80-TRACK DRIVE


I have been attempting to interface Teac FD-55 and FD-96 drives to an Amiga using a latch circuit. The problem is that the Amiga will not recognize the drive. I believe the problem centers around the ROY line and ID mode, since the latch circuit works with another 5 1/4-inch drive. Can the interface be modified to cause the drive to Auto Configure or can the mount command be used to make the computer recognize the drive?

amiga/hardware #1053, from gr (George Robbins, Commodore Business Machines), Mon Feb 9 22:56:34 1987. A comment to message 1052.

What (if any) kind of icon do you get for the drive?

amiga/hardware #1054, from afinkel (Andy Finkel, Commodore Business Machines), Mon Feb 9 22:56:34 1987. A comment to message 1052.

Have you made an entry in the mountlist for it? And what happens when you mount it? (That is, what does the info command tell you, what does the assign command tell you, what does Workbench think when you put a disk in? (Bad?))

amiga/hardware #1055, from jdw (Joanne Dow), Mon Feb 9 23:00:33 1987. A comment to message 1054.

He seems to be talking about a 96-tpi 5 1/4-inch drive. If so, he should be very sure it will handle a 3-millisecond stepping pulse period. Then consult message 445 here for the tracing of the Amiga 3 1/2-inch drive applique schematic. Those things will work very well indeed.


In fact, to further answer, I run four drives here, two are the Amiga internal and one is an external 3 1/2-inch. The other two are Mitsubishi 96-tpi drives with spare gates hacked into the drives to look like the schematic shown. I did have to add a drive-door-open switch, though, to make things like me. (Diskexchange seems entirely too kludgy.)


Hope he's got the pins numbered correctly. A nonresponsive drive should give a df1:bad-type icon. screws up the serial configuration code yields no drive, lots of confusion, and I don't know what else.

A FLAKY SYSTEM

amiga/hardware #1067, from s.choi (Seok Kim Choi), Wed Feb 11 21:34:22 1987.

My Amiga is not stable. When I turn it on and put the Workbench disk in, sometimes the computer goes down as soon as the disk drive light goes off. Also, when I open the clock window as a background job and use a communications program, the computer crashes, but not every time. Most of the time it works very well.

I sent the unit to the dealer, and they said they couldn't find fault and my Amiga worked very well on their desk. They sent it back to me and when I turned it on again, it crashed.


Have you recopied the Kickstart and Workbench disks you use from your masters? There may be some files mashed in there. Also, be sure you initialize the WB disk with the 1.2 Initialize, if you are running 1.2. Anyway, you MIGHT have a subtly munged file somewhere. (If you are running any of the beta 1.2s, all bets are off.)

Another problem might be thermal. Is your work area noticeably warmer or colder than the store's? And did the store check with YOUR disks?


I have checked my disks. That was my first action. I visited my Amiga dealer and got a new copy of WB and Kickstart. But I still have the same problem. My WB and Kickstart version are 1.1. I don't have 1.2.

My room is, of course, warmer than the store. But the Amiga works very well in that temperature most of the time. When my computer goes down, generally it goes to Guru Meditation. But sometimes it just does nothing. I have 512K of memory and one disk drive.

amiga/hardware #1070, from jdw, Thu Feb 12 11:33:09 1987. A comment to message 1069.

Hm, it sounds a bit like a weak memory chip. If you are coming up with a virgin start-up sequence (or at least no more modified than to kill the last line - the "endcli > nil:" one).

Try to make note whether or not the problem is worse with the temperature higher. It may be a temperature-related problem. Finding that kind of problem may be most difficult. If you turn your thermostat up and that day have more problems than the next day with the window open a crack, then you have a good...
start on describing a temperature problem to the store. Then they should be able to play with a heat gun or hair dryer to duplicate the problem. (That is, if they are reasonably hardware-savvy there. Good repair people are more than a tad hard to find. I wish you were out here and had bought it from Kj. They have a very good policy on warranty repair at the mere hint of problems. That must have some relationship to how well they are doing selling these newfangled mouse-driven computers that sport actual colors on the screen.)


I've tested my computer for two days. I found that the crash has something to do with the temperature. I've heard about this kind of problem but never thought I would encounter it. (Anything can happen in New York!)

amiga/hardware #1073, from chuckr (Charles Robey), Thu Feb 12 20:08:27 1987.

Oh, yeah, one last thing for s.choi. I have also heard of weird problems like that when one lives too close to an AM/FM/TV transmitter.


If that is the case, I'd strongly suspect that movement of the mouse cord would affect things greatly.


One way to beat it is to put your system on a hellacious ground plane, like a piece of grounded aluminum foil (the way I finally stopped my old PET from blowing up). The mouse line may or may not act as an antenna, depending on the impedance design, I think. RF never was my big bag; I like digital signal processing and digital messing around and communications.


Dunno about susceptibility, but the mouse leads radiate like crazy. They even interfere with 2-meter ham equipment. (I'm a ham radio operator as well as all this silliness.)

amiga/hardware #1099, from chuckr, Sat Feb 14 14:03:43 1987. A comment to message 1092.

That's interesting. I would have thought that while the mouse line could pick up signals, it would not be likely to radiate them. I have taken a quick look at the signals on the mouse line; they look like they are all DC. Don't understand that one. Is it a problem?


Not much. It is barely noticeable if I have my 2-meter rig's squelch set down very low or if signals are weak. At lower frequencies it might be, but I haven't tried. (And this is with the antenna uncomfortably close to the computer.)

AUTO-CONFIGURATION RAM

amiga/hardware #1125, from steveth (Steve Thomas), Tue Feb 17 21:48:47 1987.

I know that RAM placed at $200000 will AutoConfig under V1.2, as I've got 512K in that range now. What I'm wondering is, aside from the 4K where the custom chips are, of course, how much of that 2-megabyte space will AutoConfig? Is it limited to 1MB, 1.5Mb, 1.75Mb, 1.996Mb? I'm thinking of cramming a bunch of RAM into that space, and if I can get 2Mb (minus the last 4K), that's what I'll go for.

amiga/hardware #1126, from grr, Tue Feb 17 23:34:12 1987. A comment to message 1125.

Basically, up to 1.5Mb in 64K increments (may not be 100% exact, but that's the idea).

amiga/hardware #1128, from steveth, Wed Feb 18 02:34:26 1987. A comment to message 1126.

Okay, 1.5Mb sounds good to me. A couple more questions, if you don't mind:

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First, I assume that the RAM is checked for by writing to those locations and reading back to verify. Is the original data replaced (i.e., does it do a read before the first write and, if RAM exists, replace the data)? I'm wondering about recoverable RAM disks surviving the AutoConfig.

Second, what is the "legality" of using this address space for RAM? If I build myself a 1.2-M card to sit on the expansion bus, am I going to run into any problems down the road with someone else's product wanting this address space? How about my RAM getting along with Auto-Configured RAM and other devices?

Oh, why does 1.2 AutoConfig this space? Was it really intended for RAM?

---


Actually, it works the other way — it starts at CO and scans upwards until it sniffs at something that looks like the Amiga custom-chip registers.

One word every 64K or so will get popped, so unless your RRD expects this, you're out of luck.

The exact intent of this RAM allocation is no longer clear. It does provide a non-Auto-Config expansion, so perhaps the original allocation predates a final Auto-Config proposal.

The rub is that it overlays the area allocated to the custom-chip registers. The worst case timings involved give no slack for decoding and asserting OVR to inhibit the custom-chip cycles. Boards with built-in expansion RAM decode the CO-D8 space explicitly and are spared this problem.

The Auto-Config stuff is really not that complicated; you might want to consider it, rather than making something potentially flaky.

amiga/hardware #1132, from jesan (Jez San), Wed Feb 18 07:51:44 1987. A comment to message 1129.

Rather than losing one word every 64K, why not save the word that was there before you test that it's valid RAM, and then restore its contents so the RRDs don't get choked?


Because someone didn't think of that at the time the "memory test" was designed. That's a real bummer.


Like OOPS! That is a possible BAD issue on RRDs. I may have to limit allocations to below that.


Also, AmigaDOS will load itself up there instead of chewing up chip memory.


With the current V1.2 Kickstart, one word in each 64K gets trashed if it's a RAM. This will mess up an RRD. Except for ExecBase, I think (using the normal Amiga memory-allocation stuff) that memory will be used after any other fast RAM. Perry's RRD does something like allocate from the top, right? So, if he stays out of CO0000, all will be well, as the test for Auto-Config memory is nondestructive. An RRD that allocates from the bottom will tend to work anyway if you have Auto-Config fast RAM as well as CO0000 RAM (you'd have to have a really large RAM disk to make it fail, anyway). Yes, it would have been nice if the CO0000 memory check was nondestructive. Maybe next revision.

---


Er, how would you propose to allocate from the bottom without risking having the boot procedures clobber it? That sounds like a VERY risky proposition. It really sounds like the best bet is to limit the allocation algorithm to allocating from the top of the original 8-meg expansion area down. I had mine intentionally planned to limit itself to within the 24-bit standard Amiga address area because I don't want to use up a resource like 32-bit-wide turbo RAM with a RAM disk. I can easily change the test constant. I'm glad, though, that I was warned.


Wait a sec. I think that all of this RAM trashing doesn't make any difference, unless I'm mistaken. I assume that the routine that checks for extra chip RAM ($080000-$1FFFFF) is the same one that checks for fast RAM ($C00000-$D7FFFFF). Now, if this is true, then data will not be stomped. The reasoning behind this assumption is that one of the ways to fix the 512K Internal modification that is located at $080000 is to keep the RAM from being enabled until after the location has been checked for RAM. This is accomplished by monitoring the LED of DFO. The circuit watches for a prolonged period of the LED being turned on, such as during the loading of Kickstart. After the LED goes out, the next time it comes on triggers the circuit to turn on the RAM, and the circuit locks in that mode until power-down. Finally, to the point: the circuit does not reengage on a warm boot (it wouldn't work anyway, as Kickstart isn't reloaded), and the system doesn't configure the RAM as chip RAM again. This seems to indicate that the testing for these RAM areas is NOT done on a warm boot! It would be done if you changed operating systems, as with the ChangeKick program, but I don't think anybody expects an RRD to survive THAT.

This is all coming off the top of my head, but it makes sense, doesn't it?


The routine that checks for CO RAM is specific to that purpose. It will mess a word in each increment. I think this will only happen when you reset the machine, but I'm not sure.

amiga/hardware #1140, from perry (Perry Kivolowitz), Fri Feb 20 16:43:03 1987. A comment to message 1136.

The recoverable RAM disk has been known to survive ChangeKick.

---

ATARI ST

The trials and tribulations of creating a program that writes IBM PC-compatible test files on a floppy disk starts out this month's Atari section. Next is a discussion of a strange bug in an early version of ST BASIC. Then, there's a thread in which 500en discuss whether it's better to leave hard disks going all the time or to turn them off.  

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atari.st/questions #868, from mhadley (Michael Hadley), Sun Feb 1 05:22:20 1987.

Question: I am new here and I'm trying to write a fairly simple program, a short routine in assembler that allows me to use a 5 1/4-inch disk drive with a 6-millisecond step rate to create IBM text files. I am using a 1040ST and an M.C.C. Macro Assembler.

I know I need to be in the supervisor mode to write to the protected memory (to change Seekrate ($0440) or to insert the routine into the VOL queue ($04CE++)), but when I use any of the routines in GEM, BIOS, or the XBIOS, I get bombs. The locations in protected memory remain unaffected in spite of all my efforts to change them.

Here are a few questions for discussion:

1) What am I missing in all this information? This problem really has me bugged because I cannot get into the supervisor mode, no matter what I have tried so far.

2) Is there a SURE way to get into the supervisor mode (and out as well) that is not documented (apparently in error)?

3) Has someone already hacked this problem and is the solution available to us mortals?

atari.st/questions #869, from tskinner (Thomas Skinner), Sun Feb 1 14:30:00 1987. A comment to message 868.

I have used the GEMDOS Super function Ox20 with no problems. Are you using this or the BIOS call? It is difficult to know what you are doing wrong without seeing your code. The GENOS call is a bit tricky to use so read about it carefully. How many bombs are you getting? That tells you what the exception was.


It should also be pointed out that just changing Seekrate ($0440) is NOT enough to change the CURRENT floppy seek rate.

David Small suggested one way of changing the seek rate in atari.st/questions #767, but you should be aware that since he is using undocumented variables there is an EXCELLENT chance that this scheme will not work with future versions of TOS.


"Using undocumented variables" is really an apt way to describe my life history. . . .heh.

Try setting $A08.W and $A0C.W to $00 from $03; that will slow down the seek rate. Basically, the seek rate in low memory is ignored after a disk is initialized (at system start-up).

While this may seem to be dodging the question, those two locations are not in protected RAM; hence, no problem.

PROBLEMS WITH EARLY BASICS

atari.st/questions #877, from dbetz (David Betz, BIX), 708 chars, Thu Feb 5 10:23:20 1987. continued

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Eric Jensen, the guy who wrote the BYTE review of the 520ST, gave me a call the other day and reported a rather strange problem that someone reported to him. It seems that there are some very strange bugs in ST BASIC. His example was this:
\[
x = 18.89
\]
He said (and I didn't verify this because I don't use BASIC myself) that this resulted in a strange error message having nothing to do with the assignment statement itself, something like "unimplemented function." He further said that multiples of the magic value on the right (18.89) would cause similar but different strange error messages. Can anyone else verify this problem and is there a solution?

atari.st/questions #878, from jimomura (Jim Omura), Thu Feb 5 10:38:46 1987. A comment to message 877.

I've confirmed that \(x = 18.89\) yields the error report. Where \(x = 18.89\), you can use \(x = x / 100\) and have 18.89 properly stored. Interesting though.

atari.st/questions #926, from neilharris (Neil Harris, Atari Corp.), Sat Feb 21 12:00:31 1987. A comment to message 927.

The numeric accuracy of the original ST BASIC leaves something to be desired. The new version, written to our spec by Metacomco, is one bug away from release, and performs much better this way.


This wasn't really a problem with numeric accuracy. The messages indicated that BASIC got *very* confused while doing a simple assignment. Will the new version fix these problems also?


Well, I just tried \(x = 18.89\) in the new BASIC and it works fine.


Thanks for checking it out, Neil. I'll pass the information on to Eric Jensen.

atari.st/questions #936, from sprung (Ron Sprunger), Sun Feb 22 00:21:21 1987. A comment to message 926.

Neil, have you tested the new BASIC from a shell? The old one didn't close its windows, so was unusable from a shell.


I don't use a shell as a rule. But I do have the Mark Williams shell on the disk. Will check it out.

(... he quickly exits Flash, executes MSX, and runs BASIC. ...) Everything worked fine, more or less. A bit sloppy-looking, there was an extra cursor when I ran BASIC, and some garbage left in the background, and when I quit BASIC I had a bunch of green on top of the screen, but it did work OK. Is that what you needed to know?


Actually, what matters is whether it works from the shell several times in succession, without the desktop being visited in the meantime. The desktop has some means of reclaiming windows, which I for one have been unable to duplicate. I can run BASIC or Logo or 1stWord from my shell once, but if I try to enter them a second time, that's all she wrote.


I did go back and forth to BASIC from the shell several times. No problem.

HARD DISK TIPS


What's the current wisdom in hard disk usage? If I use a computer often during the day and daily, is it better to park the head sometimes (say for breaks of 4 hours or longer) or is it better to keep it going? What's the point at which shutting down is better (or is it always better)?

atari.st/questions #895, from mlavelle (Mark Lavelle), Sat Feb 14 02:40:44 1987. A comment to message 894.

Parking certainly can't hurt (especially if you live in earthquake country), except to slow down your first access after the park. Shutting down is a tougher call. Mechanically speaking, it might be better sometimes, but the chips don't live as long if they get cycled a lot. Of course, the chips don't like line spikes either.


I should also ask how bad it is to power down the drive without parking. That happened the other day due to a power failure.

Traditionally, the argument against stopping a hard disk at all is that head-crashing usually occurs on powering up. I've heard that a lot has been done about this, but I haven't followed the technology closely. I know that in some large commercial-quality disks, sufficient energy is stored to park the head on any unconventional power-down. I don't know if this is on all disks or just some. I presume that those disks automatically park. I guess I can presume that these disks don't (or you wouldn't need a "parkhead" utility). Leaving a disk running, of course, wears down the bearings in the drives and in time will wear down the capacitors in the power supply.

Also, is there any automatic head-cleaning system in these sealed drives to take off particle build-up that results from head crashes?


I know that *old* (open pack and cart) drives have a spring or magnetic arrangement which retracts the heads on power- or spin-down. I think that the newer/larger hard disks have some similar hack.

Head crashes with Winchester drives: Usually the head/media section is a total loss. Could be rebuilt (i.e., at a factory), but usually those parts are junked. On *little* 5 1/4-inch jobs, it usually means replacing the whole drive. With bigger

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**IBM PC and Compatibles**

We continue this month’s Best of BIX with two threads from the IBM PC section. The first investigates the possible causes of a vexing intermittent error message in the system of Doug Webster, BIX’s director of business and marketing. The final thread is a very long one that’ll tell you everything you need to know about the index holes on floppy disks. This thread evolves into a discussion of where to get basic information on computer systems.

**POSSIBLE CAUSES FOR PARITY ERRORS**

ibm.pc/hardware #2288, from dwed (Doug Webster, BIX), Tue Feb 10 17:23:56 1987.

I’ve twice had something occur recently and can’t figure out...
where it is coming from. I’ve got a PC with an internal hard disk and an add-on board that brings internal memory to 640K. Straight memory; no other razzmatazz on that board.

On at least two occasions, I’ve had XyWrite loaded up (no text file loaded, just Xy), and looked up to find the screen suddenly blank and a message reading Parity Check 1 in very large letters at the top of the screen. The ruler bar for XyWrite was gone and the screen was blank other than this message. I’ve had it happen on another occasion with a Parity Check 2 message.

I don’t know what is generating the message. The system is locked at that point and good old Ctl-Alt-Del won’t work. I have to power down and reboot. Then things work fine again. Anybody have any ideas? Is a chip going bad on the memory board?

---

ibm.pc/hardware #2290, from kquirk (Kent Quirk), Tue Feb 10 17:28:59 1987. A comment to message 2288.

Sounds to me like you’ve got a failing (not failed) memory chip. That’s in the IBM BIOS, and it happens whenever the system detects a parity error. A couple of suggestions:

1) Do you have the switches set so that you don’t do a memory test every time you boot up? Or so that you have more memory than the switches know about?

2) Run the diagnostics; let the system beat on the memory for a while. I mean the disk-based diagnostics. If you get a failure, that’ll tell you which chip to replace. If you don’t get a failure, well, back up a lot.

---

ibm.pc/hardware #2292, from dweb, Tue Feb 10 17:36:19 1987. A comment to message 2290.

One, the system is doing a memory test each cold boot-up because it pauses for a fair spell after power-on before booting in DOS from the hard disk. There are no indications of problems at that point. The switches were set per installation instructions to alert the PC to the memory now on-board. From installation until recently there had been no problems.

ibm.pc/hardware #2293, from kquirk, Tue Feb 10 17:43:12 1987. A comment to message 2292.

I still think that you should just run the diagnostics for a while. If it’s a temperature-related problem, then you might be happy for a bit before failing, and power-up self-tests won’t catch it. Also, it sounds intermittent.

I had a problem like this once, ran the diagnostics overnight, and woke up to find an error message on the printer. I replaced that chip, and it never happened again. Now that I think about it, I think I only removed and reinserted it. Try that.

---

ibm.pc/hardware #2297, from cdanderson (C. David Anderson), Tue Feb 10 20:46:40 1987. A comment to message 2292.

You might also try pushing the memory chips into their sockets—sometimes they work out a bit over time (especially if you don’t leave your machine on all the time) and, I think, this tends to make the connections flaky. Or, even take them completely out and replace them.

---

continued
Bus contention. Your add-on board could be violating memory-access specs and overlapping with a main-memory access. I’m sure there are other possibilities, too. 

I think the start of a new sector is marked by an optical sensor, which in turn signals the computer that the disk drive is, in fact, doing a new sector. Just to amplify a bit, the single index hole is found on what we call a “hard sector”, which hard sector is 0. That has to be, Cr, hard.

There is also such a thing as “hard- sectored” disks where you encounter was the right hole. Tricky business, anyway. Could be that it must be at a certain place compared to the sync marks, too, and that any “fake” hole indications won’t screw it up. But if you reformatted it’d be unusable.

A light and photo detector are on either side of the hole. When the photo detector sees the light, sector 0 is just coming under the head. That’s how the drive and controller know where sector 0 is. They find the rest by counting from the first one.

Just to amplify a bit, the single index hole is found on what we call “soft- sectored” disks. As Bob points out, it is sensed off the disk properly. I know the disk needs some kind of reference point, but I don’t think the disk should still work with a “bogus” hole in it.

I started to include “hard- sectored” in my message, but I realized that I haven’t a clue how the controller figures out which hard sector is 0. That has to be, er, hard.

A hard- sectored disk has n+1 holes, the sector 0 hole being halfway between two index holes. I was using 10- and 16-sector disks on North Star and Vector equipment.

Somebody asked me what the little hole next to the central hub is for. I told him it was the index hole, but I’m not sure what it’s used for other than giving the disk drive itself an idea where on the disk the heads were. We cut another hole, just opposite the original one and the disk was “Not Ready. . . .”, etc. I covered the original hole and the disk worked fine. What does that hole do?

Ah, but doesn’t the hole tell the drive where sector 0 is? Unless the sectors go out from the inside of the disk, that hole should be in sector 4 or something. It did get messed up with both holes open.

A comment to message 973. Did you cut a new hole in the brown oxide-covered disk or the sleeve? If the former, I’d say you were lucky. If the latter, the sensor wouldn’t be looking at the right spot to be confused by the new hole. But perhaps the disk stopped on sector 0 (I’ve seen ‘em do that) and it was the right hole, or the first hole it encountered was the right hole. Tricky business, anyway.

Well, I cut the new hole in the disk itself, using the hole on the sleeve as a guide. I then covered up the old one with a piece of a write-protect tab. Worst thing is, I *did* try and reformat it and it still works (although I don’t plan on using it for much all the same).

I have only recently had the troubles described. I covered the original hole and it worked beautifully after that.

A light and photo detector are on either side of the hole. When the photo detector sees the light, sector 0 is just coming under the head. That’s how the drive and controller know where sector 0 is. They find the rest by counting from the first one.

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BY-587
I should mention that reformating gave me some bad sectors on the disk.

The index hole has two functions. When formatting, it tells the drive where to start the track. When reading and writing, it is used to detect missing sectors. If the drive sees the index hole twice without finding the sector it's trying to read/write, it reports an error. The drive doesn't care about where the start of the track is when read/write, just about whether the sector you're looking for is there or not.

DOS does not give up so easily, though. If an error is reported while it's trying to read or write the disk, it will try again several times. With an extra index hole, finding the sector before seeing two index marks go by depends on just where the disk is in its rotation when the operation begins, so chances are that one of those retries will succeed. A note to programmers: INT 13h does not do those retries, but INT 25h and 26h do. If you're trying to emulate DOS's disk access, use those services or you might end up reporting errors on a disk that DOS thinks is just fine.

However, let us suppose that he formatted the disk using the original disk with its original reference hole and then recorded some files on it. If he then put a new hole on the disk and covered the old one, wouldn't he find it impossible to locate those files again, since the files would then be offset from a newly created reference point and the drive wouldn't know where things started? If he reformatted everything after creating the new hole and covering the old one, then the format would correctly reference only the one hole, from wherever it started things on the disk.

No, once the disk is formatted, the sectors are self-identifying. As David said, the drive just cares that it finds the sector it wants sometime before it sees the index hole twice. It doesn't care where the sector is in relation to the index hole.

Ah HAH! That sounds like a very reasonable explanation. I think this got into a little bit more detail than my friend identified. As David said, the drive just cares that it finds the sector it wants sometime before it sees the index hole twice. It doesn't care where the sector is in relation to the index hole.

Ah HAH! That sounds like a very reasonable explanation. I think this got into a little bit more detail than my friend expected, but I still appreciate the effort.

NS-DOS retries failed-disk operations, usually four or five times. Depending on the location of your "extra" index hole, I would expect the low-level operation to fail about one time out of four. Depending on timing, you might never see an error message, but disk operations are probably quite a bit slower on that disk. If you use INT 13h to access the disk, you'll see a lot more failures.

Just curious, but where did you learn that? Are there books available that describe disk drive technology?
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folded over the last few years. The majority of new computer users did not want (or did not have the background necessary) to understand the actual electronics and mechanics of the computers they were using. The best place in the world to get information on disk drives is a technician's service manual.

I think that this is why so many computer books were written at the "This is a Computer" level of information.

ibm.pc/drives #983, from petewhite (Peter White), Sun Feb 1 21:10:40 1987. A comment to message 982.

From "Understanding Digital Computers," a Radio Shack Publication (62-2027):

"Incidentally, did you notice the three holes in the envelope of the floppy? The center hole, obviously, is for the motor drive mechanism. The rounded rectangular hole permits the recording head to make direct contact with the surface of the floppy. The small round hole permits the drive system to identify various data locations on the disk by one or more holes around its surface. It's called the 'sector hole.'

"Let's discuss the sector hole, since it's very important. Information on each of the data tracks around the surface of the disk can be stored in one or more locations called 'sectors.' There are two ways of dividing a disk into sectors. 'Soft-sectored' disks have only one sector hole. A computer program (software) is required to divide the disk into sectors and, while this provides considerable design flexibility, the program can be difficult to design and use."

"Hard-sectored' floppies have 2 or more sector holes, and this permits a data track to be divided into 2, 4, 8, 16, or 2 sectors. Electronic control circuits built into the drive system take care of the 'housekeeping' chores necessary to store and retrieve data in various sectors. Most commercial floppy disk systems use the hard-sector approach."

Yes, an old book - but one of the best ever found to help explain just about anything in basic digital computers. In fact, it explains hexadecimal arithmetic so well it has helped several who COULDN'T understand hex at all.

Stay tuned, folks, next week it's "Learn about binary logic, how it works, and how to use it."

ibm.pc/drives #995, from gingle (George Ingle), Wed Feb 4 01:38:38 1987. A comment to message 983.

Is this going to be one of those "on again/off again" things?


Does it explain how to spell "hexadecimal" as well, Pete? <grin>

ibm.pc/drives #1012, from johnl (John Fistere), Thu Feb 12 02:03:12 1987. A comment to message 983.

Does it explain why a "2s complement" is so named? I've heard a few theories, but none that wrap it all up.

ibm.pc/drives #1024, from all (Eric Klien), Mon Feb 16 20:43:56 1987. A comment to message 1012.

A 2s complement is a complement plus 1. 1 + 1 = 2, so it's called a 2s complement.

the "This is the keyboard" level of information.

MACINTOSH

This month's Macintosh section has two threads. The first, long though it is, is a prime example of the type of discussions that evolve on BIX. It covers the potential advantages, disadvantages, and stumbling blocks of converting an IBM PC program written in C to the Mac. If you're wondering about getting started in Mac programming, read this thread. Then there's a short thread on font-spacing problems in MacWrite.

GETTING INTO MAC SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

macintosh/softw.dev/implpt #810, from lee.richardson (Lee Richardson), Sat Feb 14 22:49:25 1987

A couple of questions about Mac software development:

First, I have an application, written in C for the IBM PC, that takes up about 50K after it's compiled. I want to port it over to the Mac using a reasonable amount of the Mac goodies (windows, menus, etc). I know C, and have been using Mac programs for over a year, but have never done any C programming on it. How much time should I allow for learning all the Mac's idiosyncrasies? Any rules of thumb for conversion time after that? I'm looking for ballpark figures.

Second, an obvious question to go along with that: What are some good references for learning the Mac? Is Lightspeed C the C of choice right now? Thanks!

macintosh/softw.dev/implpt #811, from lloe (Larry Loeb), Sun Feb 15 09:24:07 1987. A comment to message 810.

Gee, that's a hard one. You should read Apple's "Inside Macintosh," of course. That alone can take a good month (part-time). Some C compilers will default a stdio to a default window so you can program the Mac like a glass TTY. But that method doesn't allow you of all the Mac's features (which I'll assume is why you want to port it). My gut feeling is that the average newcomer to Mac programming will take three months to become barely proficient (I have no data to back that up, just a feeling).

And yes, Lightspeed C is a very good environment and cheap to buy.

macintosh/softw.dev/implpt #812, from nwallach (Naor Walach), Sun Feb 15 16:33:50 1987. A comment to message 810.

Plan to devote a LOT of time. The Mac is not the simplest of computers to write for. Good references are Apple's own "Inside Macintosh," which is currently sold as a four-volume set. Lightspeed C is probably one of the better C compilers out there. Current version is 2.0. Good luck!

macintosh/softw.dev/implpt #813, from lee.richardson (Lee Richardson), Sun Feb 15 17:59:03 1987. A comment to message 812.

Thanks. That's about what I had figured. This would be a contract job and I was wondering how long it would be before I could put any billable hours into it. Was hoping there was something to go along with "Inside Macintosh." I have heard that it can be fairly dense in a lot of places.

macintosh/softw.dev/implpt #822, from nwallach, Mon Feb 16 18:03:43 1987. A comment to message 813.

Another source of info that might be less dense is "Macintosh Revealed: Programming the Macintosh Toolbox" by Steve Chernicoff. It doesn't cover everything you will need to know, but it will be easier to start with.
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Another good reference is "Programming the Mac in C" by Cummings and Pollock, which seems to apply very well to your request. It was written with another compiler in mind, but you shouldn't have much trouble converting. Good luck.

I very much like Scott Knaster's book "How to Write Software for the Macintosh." It goes a long way towards demystifying the Mac. "Inside Macintosh" is a good reference, but it's murder on somebody just learning the Mac. Scott's book is nowhere near so intimidating, much more fun, and covers all you need to get rolling.

Another thing that could prove valuable, especially if you're doing commercial work, is the "Macintosh Technical Notes" series, available from APDA.

I have a radical suggestion for you: Use MacApp to port your application to the Macintosh. MacApp packages much of the Mac's mysteries for you in easily used objects. Problems like printing, window management, desk-accessory compatibility, etc., just vanish with MacApp, since it takes care of all these for you.

There ARE two problems, however. The first is that MacApp is currently only callable from Object Pascal and Object Assembler. The shell of your Mac application will have to be in Pascal. However, you can still call the C routines that you will port over from the PC. To the extent that your PC application is well-modularized (user-interface stuff separated from the fundamental computations that form the basis of the application), this is usually not too difficult.

The second problem is that you must learn a little bit about object-oriented programming. Luckily, this is not too hard and there is a great book: "Object-Oriented Programming for the Macintosh." (Sorry guys, I just couldn't help it!!). Don't let the fact that I wrote the book sway you one way or the other.

I'll check out both the Sybex book and the Technical Notes. I figure the more stuff I read, the better chance I have of understanding what's going on. Is there an address for APDA on the board?

Just to get some ideas of directions maybe NOT to go in, would MacApp or the Macintosh Programmers Workbench be worthwhile to investigate? It looked like using MacApp would imply learning object-oriented programming (another level of complexity I don't need right now), and that MPW hasn't been released for general use.

I recommend LightspeedC; it's a solid product, and quick. It fits on my Fat Mac and two external disk drives at home. They also provide the resource compiler and ResEdit.

In a different direction, does using MacApp cause any performance degradation in your resulting programs? Don't you also have to have at least a Mac Plus to use it?

MacApp currently requires at least 1 megabyte of RAM for development, though applications developed with MacApp can run on 128K machines.

2. Performance degradation: Basically, no. This is one of the most common misconceptions of object-oriented programming.  Demos I have given of MacApp applications at MacWorld shows and other places typically convince people that this is not the case. (Of course, if you are one of those people for whom tightly hand-coded assembly language is BARELY fast enough, then you may feel otherwise. . . .)

3. Where does the learning trade-off occur? This is a hard question. In my opinion, if you learn QuickDraw and a handful of file-system calls (FSOpen, etc.), you can get your MacApp application off the ground and a long way toward completion. (The best book for this is "Macintosh Revealed" by Chernioff.)

Will you want to eventually learn about resources, dialogs, and bunches of other stuff? Sure, but the operative word here is "eventually." Will you ever have to learn about the Window or event managers? Probably not, unless your application is most unusual. MacApp handles all this for you.

Replies to your MacApp questions:

1. MacApp currently requires at least 1 megabyte of RAM for development, though applications developed with MacApp can run on 128K machines.

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3. "Customers can choose a wide range of input accessories from a pen/stylus to a 16-button cursor.

4. "GTCO's cursor switches have excellent tactile feedback, with no 'bounce.' Users never have to redo a command because the button did a 'double pick.'

5. "DIGI-PADs can be used for more than just screen pointing and tablet menuing. I have many customers who need to trace an existing drawing into their CAD system, so a DIGI-PAD's high degree of accuracy is a prime consideration.

6. "All DIGI-PADs have the same features and performance. I can demo an 11"x11" DIGI-PAD and know that any other size will work in my customer's system. Since DIGI-PADs are available in sizes up to 42"x60", there's one to match every user's needs. And the L Series DIGI-PADs are really economical when a large tablet is needed.

7. "DIGI-PADs can digitize through non-metallic materials up to 1" in thickness, without compromising the standard 0.001" resolution. Some of my customers digitize directly through their engineering logs. I couldn't have sold other tablets to them.

8. "While visiting GTCO's headquarters I realized why DIGI-PADs have such high reliability: GTCO has developed a superior technology and manufactures DIGI-PADs in its own highly automated factory.

"I can promote GTCO tablets without hesitation because they are designed for the serious professional who demands superior performance."
Don't let buzzwords like "object-orientation" scare you. OOP is really a comprehensive embodiment of all the proven topics in software engineering (data abstraction, modularity, top-down design) with a couple of new ideas thrown in (inheritance and dynamic binding). OOP just gives you language support for the things you are probably doing now on your own.

Consider the following analogy: If someone held your feet to a fire, could you code a recursive algorithm in FORTRAN? Sure you could. It would be messy maintaining your own stacks, popping and pushing for routine invocation, but you could do it. Should you? Of course not. Such a task is only worthy of a student. A real pro, if a recursive algorithm was the best solution, would choose a modern language like C, Pascal, or Ada, since they support recursion. Similarly, OOP and object-oriented languages give you language support for the kinds of things that help you manage your application in the large: modularity, complexity control, flexibility.

(In case you can't tell, I'm a totally committed object-oriented evangelist! I will get down from the pulpit now.)

macintosh/softw.devIpmt #830, from lee.richardson, Thu Feb 19 00:44:16 1987 A comment to message 828.

Thanks for the answers about Macapp - that's just what I wanted. I was at a fairly good-sized bookstore yesterday and couldn't find any reference to Macapp at all (too soon?), so this gives me a better idea of what it is. I did pick up the first volume of "Macintosh Revealed."

I've got a little more info about this possible programming project, and it turns out that there are 60,000 lines of C in the original PC-DOS version of the program (I'm wondering how accurate that is, but that's what I was told). It seems that a program of that size would start to benefit from modularity, complexity control, flexibility, et al, so it may make sense to go the MacApp route. I really have no objections to learning OOP, since it seems like a direction programming is heading in anyway; I just don't want to overload my learning capacity.

Actually, this whole project is beginning to sound unrealistic, and I hope it turns out to be him.

macintosh/softw.devIpmt #831, from kschmucker, Thu Feb 19 08:05:14 1987 A comment to message 830.

Most B. Daltons carry "Object-Oriented Programming for the Macintosh" (Hayden/Sams is the publisher). It came out last summer, so it is not too early. As you can probably guess, I look for it in every bookstore I go in. My hit rate of late as been close to 100%

However, if you are having trouble, call the publisher directly to order: 1-800-428-SAMS. Have your MC or Visa number handy.

macintosh/softw.devIpmt #832, from tom_m_thompson, Thu Feb 19 09:16:26 1987 A comment to message 830.

60K lines? Hope a lot of that's comments. It would definitely help. If there's no comments at all, I'd toss the thing.


I've been using NW for two months, and I am very pleased with it. The environment is solid, can be used in numbseul fashion (a great feature for me), and has lots of room for growth. I started off using only its most rudimentary features and was very pleased with it. As time has passed and my confidence has grown, I have started to play with some of the snazzier features, but there's so much in there that I'm sure I'll still be improving my use of it years from now. The Pascal compiler is good, bug-free, and quite fast enough (beats the hell out of Lisa Pascal running out of a Profile), especially when you use the $LOAD directive. The MAKE facility is extremely useful, but takes a while to figure out. I THINK that you're writing a slightly intelligent programed EXEC file, but in truth you're doing something very different, and until you get the feel of MAKE, it will drive you nuts. Once you get over that problem, MAKE is wonderful.

So I'm very happy with NW.

macintosh/softw.devIpmt #827, from lee.richardson, Tue Feb 17 02:27:28 1987 A comment to message 824.

So it looks like my first step here is to chase down APOD and see what they have to say about both MPW and Macapp, and then go from there. That's certainly enough to get me started.

macintosh/softw.devIpmt #818, from frankib (Frank Boosman), Mon Feb 16 02:23:59 1987. A comment to message 814.

Don't forget probably the best third-party book on programming the Macintosh, "How to Write Software on the Macintosh," by Scott Knaster. It contains an excellent section on debugging your program, which is probably what you'll spend most of your time doing.

FONT SPACING IN MACWRITE

macintosh/software #724, from igeooffion (Lee Geoffrion), Sun Feb 1 19:55:37 1987.

I ran into a strange problem with MacWrite 4.5 that may be someone out there can clarify.

A colleague had written his dissertation using MacWrite the in Times font (12 point). Rough drafts were done on an Imagewriter. Since these have severe format restrictions, considerable time was been spent laying out 400 pages of manuscript.

When he went to print the final draft on a LaserWriter, all lines ran about 3/8 inch longer than the Imagewriter, even though there were no additional characters in each line. More importantly, the final output did not match the displayed rulers.

I thought it might be a spacing difference between the Imagewriter and the LaserWriter. We tested it by converting part of the thesis to Microsoft Word. In Word, the screen line lengths and LaserWriter line lengths agreed perfectly. Thus, the problem seems to reside in how MacWrite calculates character spacing.

Is this just a feature (bug) of MacWrite, or have we done something very wrong?

macintosh/software #732, from pbrewer (Phillip Brewer), Tue Feb 3 20:00:29 1987. A comment to message 724.

I've seen this problem discussed on other nets. The solution is to put a LaserWriter driver on the system disk, go into Choise Printer and select the LaserWriter as the printer, and then go into the Page Set-up dialog and click OK. This will tell the text editor that you will really be printing on a laserwriter and it will adjust the line lengths accordingly. This works even if you don't have a laserwriter hooked up. ■
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Special Package: 2 motors (MO-103) + ST-143 PA-181: $99

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Model 100. Uses 40 pin socket. (Socket is duplicated on adapter) AR-133...$69

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An A-BUS system with two Motherboards

A-BUS adapter (IBM) in foreground

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About the A-BUS:

- All the A-BUS cards are very easy to use with any language that can read or write to a Port or Memory. In BASIC, use INP and OUT (or PEEK and POKE with Apples and Tandy Color Computers).
- They are all compatible with each other. You can mix and match up to 25 cards to fit your application. Card addresses are easily set with jumpers.
- A-BUS cards are shipped with power supplies (except PD-123) and detailed manuals (including schematics and programming examples).

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- IBM PC XT/AT compatible $199.00

MATH CO-PROCESSOR

- 80187-28 $85.00
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DISK DRIVES

- IBM 515 MB Floppy Drive $99.00
- IBM 20 MB FDD Drive $99.00
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- IBM 5.25 MB FDD Drive $395.00

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- IBM 2400 baud external $169.00
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- IBM XT, AT is a trademark of International Business Machine

TERMS:

- Hardware and handling charge starting from minimum $6.00 each shipment.
- 15% restocking charge is required for non-authorized return merchandise.
Inquiry 292

**There's a Killer in Your Office! STATIC**

It's true! Only power-line problems hurt computers more than static. Simply walking across a carpeted floor can generate fields and voltages up to 100,000 volts! All static-sensitive products include a warning sign at top and have built-in charge traps to reduce static hazards.

Clear plastic chair mat—losses 1500 volts in less than 0.1 seconds.

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SIEGEL COMPUTER CONTROL

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Inquiry 133

**Why waste time? ACCELERATE with VCACHE™**

**HARD DISK ACCELERATOR**

- Caching eliminates repetitive disk accesses
- Use up to 15 MB of extended/expanded or 500 Kb of standard memory

**DISKETTE ACCELERATOR**

FAST — FRIENDLY — SAFE VCACHE

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**SHARt SERIAL PRINTER or MODEM between TWO COMPUTERS!**

**'Printer Splitter'**

Model 2PDSG $44.95
Model 22PDSG $44.95

Now two computers can share one modem or one serial printer and both can be connected at the same time. Self-powered from RS-232C port may be left permanently connected. SAME-DAY SHIPMENT! MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE!

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Inquiry 135

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$375 per axis

**4 AXIS VERY SMART STEPPER CONTROLLER**

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- Input for Limit Switches, Panic button, etc
- On board multi-axis control
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See page 367 for details of the SC-149

Inquiry 136

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Inquiry 138

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HERE IS THE ECONOMICAL AND THE BEST SOLUTION

- Completely automatic operation
- Eliminates the need for manual switching or cable wrapping
- May be used for other peripherals (i.e., plotters)
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- Totally transparent to the user
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- 32 byte optional buffer
- 288-A processor
- 5 free models to choose from:
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  - PMS 607: PMS 606 with 32 byte buffer $234.00
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  - 8 byte buffer $294.00
  - PMS 611: PMS 610 with 32 byte buffer $364.00
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  - 8 byte buffer $441.00
  - PMS 616: PMS 615 with 32 byte buffer $502.00

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Inquiry 139

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**THE NO RISK DISK**

- 5 1/4" M229D 24THPI $16.10/Box of 10
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Inquiry 140
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**CAT 640 Base System**
- 256K (Optional 640K)
- 150 watt pwr. supply
- AT Style Keyboard
- 477 or 8MHz Clock Speed
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- 1.360K 1/2 HT Drive

**OPTION A**
- Base System plus:
  - Monochrome Graphics Card
  - Monochrome Graphics Monitor
  - Parallel Port

**OPTION B**
- Base System plus:
  - Color Graphics Card
  - Color Graphics Monitor
  - Parallel Port

**OPTION C**
- Base System plus:
  - Mono. Graphic Card
  - Monochrome Graphics Monitor
  - Parallel Port
  - 20 Meg Hard Drive

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**Inquiry 192**
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BYTE Subscriber Service
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Piscataway, NJ 08854
The Sony 53W is a 3.5 inch double sided double density disk drive. The drive can be connected to your existing floppy controller but requires MS/DOS 3.2 to properly operate in the PC and compatibles. The 53W is similar to the drive being used in the PC portable.

The U.S. Robotics Micro 2400 modem is one hundred percent Hayes compatible, auto dial, auto answer, auto everything. A super value at only $189.

The Bernoulli Box by Iomega features 16 and 20 megabyte removable cartridges, and delivers capacity, expandability, transportability, security and speed in one versatile subsystem. It's the lowest transfer megabytes of information safely and reliably for primary or backup storage. It combines several software programs onto a single cartridge for easy switching from one to another.

The Bernoulli Box has incredible resistance to shock and vibration completely eliminating the need for hard cases.毕竟是...So great you can carry it by adding removable cartridges. When security is essential, lock up your system just lock up the cartridges. The Bernoulli Box delivers performance that photon levels of hard disk speed and the convenience of floppy disks. At these prices you can't be caught wishing you had one after a loss of important data.

The Smarteam 2400 offers all the features of the Hayes Smart Modem 2400 for a fraction of the price. Now is your opportunity to purchase a 2400 baud modem for only $289. Also available: The Smarteam 1200 at only $139.

The Sharp 310/1200 baud modem matches design specs of Bell 212A and for all practical purposes those of the Hayes Smart Modem. The Avalex brings you reliable data transmission for only $99.

The Lea Sieger 7107 color graphics terminal is both DEC VT-100 and Tektronix (4010/4014) compatible. The terminal offers a palette of 4,096 colors with a resolution of 640 by 480 pixels on a 13 inch non-glare black screen. Horizontal and image zoom, to 16 times original size, are standard features of this color graphics terminal. The 7107 is the ideal terminal for CAD/CAM applications.

The Ideal plotter for architecture, CAD engineering or graphic design. At $595 it is available in an assortment of 32 different colors and widths. Enlargements or reductions are achieved through elaborate firmware. Pen resolution is four inches per second with 0.04 line width capability.

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• PARALLEL PRINTER PORT

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<tr>
<th>DS/DD</th>
<th>QUME TRACK 142 BELT DRIVE</th>
<th>MITSUBISHI 4851 DIRECT DRIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>360 K</td>
<td>$65.00</td>
<td>$89.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5¼” ½ HEIGHT</td>
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ASTEC 65 WATT SWITCHING POWER SUPPLY

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions: 5.0” - Length</th>
<th>4.4” - Width</th>
<th>2.4” - Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output 12V 0.6A - 12V 0.6A - 12V 0.6A (in parallel)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition:</td>
<td>+12V DC - 1.5A</td>
<td>+12V (~90%) (in paralel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>$29.95</td>
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### Satellite TV Descrambler Chip
The MS3231 is a TV camera sync generator designed to provide 1575 line sync to NTSC cameras.

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### 74HCH—Speed CMOS

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- High Density Layout
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- 20 pin LP
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- 30 pin LP
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**USING**

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**HIGH-SPEED CMOS**

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**40 PIN ST IBM**

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**14 PIN WW**

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**DIP Connectors**

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**D-Subminiature**

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**IC Connectors**

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When I called JDR, the operator was super friendly and just kept on mentioning very helpful. In addition, the delivery was made very quickly. On top of all that, I am most happy with the item itself: it fits, it's handy, and works perfectly. Thanks again and keep up the good work.

Scott Feiertag

**Ribbon Cable**

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**LEO CARD CONNECTORS**

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5µF 15V 0.1µF 470 0.1µF 50V .1µF
22µF 15V 0.1µF 470 0.1µF 50V .1µF
22µF 15V 0.1µF 470 0.1µF 50V .1µF
1µF 0.1µF 470 0.1µF 50V .1µF
0.1µF 0.1µF 470 0.1µF 50V .1µF

DISC
5µF 50V 0.05 1µF 50V 0.05
10µF 50V 0.05 1µF 50V 0.05
22µF 50V 0.05 1µF 50V 0.05
47µF 50V 0.05 1µF 50V 0.05
100µF 50V 0.05 1µF 50V 0.05
220µF 50V 0.05 1µF 50V 0.05
1µF 0.1µF 470 0.1µF 50V .1µF
1µF 0.1µF 470 0.1µF 50V .1µF

MONOLITHIC
33µF 0.1µF 470 0.1µF 50V .1µF
0.04µF 0.1µF 470 0.1µF 50V .1µF

ELECTROLYTIC
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22µF 25V 16 22µF 25V 16
47µF 25V 16 47µF 25V 16
100µF 25V 16 100µF 25V 16
220µF 25V 16 220µF 25V 16
1µF 25V 16 1µF 25V 16
1µF 25V 16 1µF 25V 16
1µF 25V 16 1µF 25V 16

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<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CASPER</td>
<td>EGA &amp; CGA COMPATIBLE, 15.7&quot; x 21&quot; kHz, RES: 640 x 350, 320 x 200, 31mm DOT PITCH, 25 MHz, 16 COLORS, 14&quot; BLACK MATRIX SCREEN, CABLE FOR IBM PC Included</td>
<td>$399.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAMSUNG</td>
<td>IBM COMPATIBLE TTI INPUT, 12&quot; NON-GRADE AMBER, LOW DISTORTION SCREEN, RESOLUTION: 720H x 360V, ATOMIC CASE WITH SWIVEL BASE, ONE YEAR WARRANTY</td>
<td>$119.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORTRONICS</td>
<td>IBM COMPATIBLE TTI INPUT, 12&quot; NON-GRADE AMBER, VERY HIGH RESOLUTION: 1100 LINES (CENTER), 25 MHz BANDWIDTH, CABLE FOR IBM PC INCLUDED</td>
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APPLTF COMPATIBLE INTERFACE CARDS

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<td>EGA MONITOR</td>
<td>DURAPRINT OR BURNT@ 2N SERIES EPROM (2716 TO 27128), MENU DRIVEN SOFTWARE, HIGH SPEED WRITER/ERASE/READ</td>
<td>$59.95</td>
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<td>EPROM PROGRAMMER</td>
<td>16K RAMCARD, FULL 2 YEAR WARRANTY, QUICKLY TESTS MANY COMMON IC'S, CAN BE USED IN PLACE OF THE APPLE LANGUAGE CARD, DISPLAYS PASS OR FAIL</td>
<td>$219.95</td>
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MOLDED INTERFACE CABLES

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KEYBOARD-AP

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JOYSTICK-00 | $19.95 |

POWER STRIP

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<td>UL APPROVED</td>
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<td>$12.95</td>
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CALL FOR VOLUME QUOTES
EGA CARD AND MONITOR NOW ONLY $569!

QUALITY IBM COMPATIBLE MOTHERBOARDS FROM MODULAR CIRCUIT TECHNOLOGY

TURBO 4.77 / 8 MHz $ 129.95
JDR PART #: MCT-TURBO

- 4.77 or 8 MHz Operation with 8088-2 & Optional 8087-2 Co-Processor
- Dynamically Adjusts Speed During Discrete Operation for Maximum Processor Reliability
- Choice of Normal - Turbo Mode or Software Select Processor Speed

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1200 BUAD HALF CARD

EASYDATA-12B $ 119.95
1200 BUAD FULL CARD

EASYDATA-24B $ 199.95
2400 BUAD FULL CARD

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NO SOFTWARE INCLUDED

EASYDATA-12D $ 119.95
1200 BUAD

EASYDATA-24D $ 219.95
2400 BUAD

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100% IBM COMPATIBLE, PASSES IBM EGA DIAGNOSTICS

- COMPATIBLE WITH IBM EGA, COLOR GRAPHICS AND MONOCHROME ADAPTERS
- TRIPLE SCANNING FREQUENCY FOR DISPLAY ON EGA, STANDARD RGB OR HIGH RESOLUTION MONOCHROME MONITOR
- FULL 256K OF VIDEO RAM ALLOWS 640 x 350 PIXELS IN 16 OF 64 COLORS
- LIGHT PEN INTERFACE

MCT-CG $ 49.95

- SHORT SLOT CARD USES VLSI Chips to Increase Reliability
- SUPPORTS RGB, COMPOSITE MONOCHROME & COLOR AND AN RF MODULATOR OUTPUT
- 320 x 200 COLOR GRAPHICS MODE
- 640 x 200 MONOCHROME GRAPHICS MODE
- LIGHT PEN INTERFACE

MCT-MGP $ 59.95

- COMPATIBLE WITH IBM MONOCHROME AND HERCULES GRAPHICS STANDARDS
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- PARALLEL PRINTER PORT, CONFIGURABLE AS LPT1 OR LPT2
- 260 x 348 GRAPHICS MODE
- LOTUS COMPATIBLE
- Can Run with Color Graphics Card in the Same System

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- COMPATIBLE WITH IBM MONOCHROME AND HERCULES GRAPHICS STANDARDS
- SERIAL PORT OPTION
- PARALLEL PRINTER PORT
- 720 x 348 GRAPHICS MODE
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- LOTUS COMPATIBLE
- SELECTABLE TO RUN ALONG WITH COLOR GRAPHICS CARD IN THE SAME SYSTEM

MCT-MONO $ 99.95

- IBM COMPATIBLE MOTHERBOARDS
- HARDWARE IOK RAM INSTALLED
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- SUPPORTS VARIOUS MANUFACTURER FORMATS WITH 12, 15, 21 AND 25 VOLT PROGRAMMING
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**MULTIFUNCTION CARDS**

**FROM MODULAR CIRCUIT TECHNOLOGY**

**MCT-MF**
- All the features of AST's six pack plus at half the price!
  - 64K Dynamic RAM using 4164s
  - Includes Serial Port, Parallel Printer Port, Game Controller Port and Clock/Calendar
  - Software for a RAMDisk, Print Spooler and Clock/Calendar
  - INCLUDES SERIAL PORT. PARALLEL PRINTER

**MCT-ATMF**
- Adds up to 3 MB of 1 bit RAM to the AT
  - User expandable to 1.5 MB of on-board memory (no memory installed)
  - Flexible address configuration
  - Includes serial power PC compatible and clock/calendar
  - Optional piggyback board permits expansion to 3 MB

**MCT-MIO**
- A perfect companion for our motherboard
  - 2 Drive Floppy Disk Controller
  - Includes serial port, parallel port, game port and clock/calendar with battery back-up
  - Software for a RAMDisk, Print Spooler and Clock/Calendar

**MCT-IO**
- Use with MCT-FH for a minimum of slots used
  - Serial Port Addressable as COM1, COM2, LPT1 or LPT2
  - Parallel Printer Port Addressable as LPT1 or LPT2
  - Game Port and Clock/Calendar with a battery back-up

**MCT-MIO**
- Use with MCT-ATFH for a minimum of slots used
  - Serial Port Addressable as COM1, COM2, LPT1 or LPT2
  - Parallel Printer Port Addressable as LPT1 or LPT2
  - Game Port
  - Use 56400 serial support chip for high-speed operation in an AT

**MCT-RAM**
- A contiguous memory solution for your short or regular slot
  - Short slot, low power PC compatible design
  - CAN OFFER UP TO 576K of additional memory
  - User Selectable Configuration Amounts of 192, 384, 512, 256 & 576K
  - Using combinations of 64 & 256K RAM

**MCT-MIO**
- All the features of AST's six pack plus at half the price!

**MCT-ATM**
- 2MB piggyback board (zero K installed)

**MCT-EMS**
- 2MB of Lotus/Intel/Microsoft compatible memory for the XT
  - Conforms to Lotus, Intel EMS
  - User expandable to 2 MB
  - Uses 16K or 256K Dynamic RAM (no memory installed)
  - Use as expanded or conventional memory, RAMdisk or spooler
  - Software includes EMS device drivers, Print Spooler and RAMdisk

**MCT-ATM**
- AT version of the MCT-EMS

**DISK CONTROLLER CARDS**

**MCT-FDC**
- Quality design offers a floppy control in a single slot
  - Interfaces up to 4 FDDs to an IBM PC or compatible
  - Includes cabling for 2 internal drives
  - Uses standard DB25 connector for external drives
  - Supports both DS, DD and DS-00 when used with DOS 3.2 or JFORMAT

**MCT-HDC**
- Hard disk control for what others charge for floppy control
  - IBM XT compatible controller
  - Supports 16 drive sizes including 5, 10, 20, 30 & 40MB
  - Options include the ability to divide 1 large drive into 2 smaller, logical drives
  - Includes cabling for 1 internal drive

**MCT-RL**
- Get up to 50% more storage space on your hard disk
  - Increases the capacity of planted media drives by 50%
  - RLL 2, 7 encoding for more reliable storage
  - Transfer rate is also 50% faster; 750K sec vs 500K sec
  - Use with ST-228 drive to achieve 30-MB in a half height slot

**MCT-FH**
- Starved for slots? Satisfy it with this timely design
  - Interfaces up to 2 FDDs, 2 HDDs and 1 MOD
  - Floppy interface supports both DS, DD and DS-00 when used with DOS 3.2 or JFORMAT
  - All popular HDD sizes are supported, including 5, 10, 20, 30 & 40MB
  - Can divide 1 large drive into 2 smaller, logical drives

**MCT-ATFH**
- Floppy and hard disk control in a true AT design
  - At compatible control up to 2 360K, 720K or 1.2MB as well as 2 HDDs using the AT standard control tables
  - Supports at style front panel LED to indicate HD activity
  - 16 bit bus provides rapid data transfers
  - Fully supported by AT BIOS
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BOMB RESULTS

Top billing for February goes to What's New, written by BYTE staffers. This is followed by Jerry Pournelle's Computing at Chaos Manor column, entitled "A Confederation of Hackers." In third place is Steve Ciarcia's Circuit Cellar project, "Build an Infrared Remote Controller." In fourth and the winner of $100 is John Unger for his review of "Four Portable Computers." Rene Stolk and George Ettershank will split the $50 second-place prize for their Programming Insight: "Calculating the Area of an Irregular Shape." Winner of the $50 award for quality goes to Dennis Dykstra for his review of "Microsoft QuickBASIC 2.0." Congratulations everyone.

COMING UP IN BYTE

Features:
A special advance look at a major new software development. We also have articles on Conrec, which is a contouring subroutine; storing maps on CD-ROMs; and Karmarkar's algorithm.

Theme:
Computer-aided design will include the following topics: data structures of CAD, shareware CAD, computer-aided routing of PC boards, the IEGS data interchange format, and silicon compilers.

Circuit Cellar:
Part 2 of Steve Ciarcia’s video digitizer.

Programming Insights:
Articles on complex math in Pascal and a polynomial curve fitter in BASIC.

Reviews:
Two 12-MHz IBM PC AT compatibles, the IBM PC XT 286, the Amiga Turbo Chassis, a group review of Mice, three C interpreters for the IBM PC, Microsoft's Windows, Smalltalk/V, Turbo Prolog and Chalcedony Prolog, an expert system tool called Acquaint, and a filer called Zoomracks.

Kernel:
Jerry Pournelle’s Chaos Manor, According to Webster, Dick Pountain’s new Algorithms column, and Ezra Shapiro’s Applications Only.
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79 72 01 81

392 BYTE • MAY 1987
## Alphabetical Index to Advertisers

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* Correspond directly with company.
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* Correspond directly with company
The executive suite. Until now, dot matrix printers just weren't welcome there.

They were too noisy, for one thing. But even more important, they couldn't deliver the quality top executives demand.

But now there's the XL series from NEC. Our Pinwriter XL series printers have multistrike film ribbons that produce true letter-quality documents—the kind any executive would be proud to sign. They print in 8 different colors—on paper or transparencies—to make charts, graphs and executive presentations more impressive. And they're the quietest matrix printers you've never heard.

They're also fast. Take our new Pinwriter P9XL, for example. It's over 30% faster than most other printers in its price range, with nearly twice as much memory to handle the really big jobs—including payroll, invoices, continuous forms, and multi-page reports.

Executives will also be pleased to learn that the Pinwriter XL printers, like all NEC printers, are built to run an average of 5 years before they might need a repair. In fact, they have the highest reliability ratings in the industry.

So make an executive decision. Call 1-800-343-4418 (in MA 617-264-8635) and ask for the name of the NEC dealer nearest you. Or write to NEC Information Systems, Dept. 1610, 1414 Massachusetts Ave., Boxborough, MA 01719. NEC PRINTERS. THEY ONLY STOP WHEN YOU WANT THEM TO.
Next to your computer,

nothing beats
a Tandy® printer

IBM® PC compatible
For the best value and selection in
top-quality printers, shop your local
Radio Shack Computer Center.
We've got what you need, whatever
your printing requirements.

Versatile business
printer
The DMP 2200 (26-1279, $1695)
provides dot-matrix printing at up to
380 characters per second. Efficient,
fast printing means no long delays
for reports—and that saves your
business money. Supports elongated,
double-high, bold, underline, super/
subscripts, italics, double strike and
bit-image graphics.

Customized type styles
Use the Font Editing Packages
(sold separately) to load different
type styles for print quality that
rivals a daisy wheel. In the draft
mode, the DMP 2110 (26-2810,
$1295) prints up to 240 charac-
ters per second. Includes data-
processing, word-processing and
graphics modes.

Low-cost business printer
The DMP 430 (26-1277, $699)
features an 18-wire print head and
allows a choice of micro, italic and
double-high fonts, as well as bit-
image graphics. Prints up to 180
characters per second.

Letter-quality daisy-wheel
printers
Give your correspondence, re-
ports and memos that clean, crisp
“electric-typewriter look.” The
DWP 520 daisy-wheel printer
(26-2800, $995) produces up to 500
words per minute and supports
bold-face, strike-through, double-
underline, super and subscripts.

And for letter-quality printing un-
der $400, the DWP 230 (26-2812,
$399.95) is the clear choice. Prints
up to 200 words per minute.

Stop by your local Radio Shack
and see our complete selection of
printers and accessories today.

TANDY COMPUTERS: In Business... for Business™

Prices apply at Radio Shack Computer Centers and participating stores and dealers. IBM/Registered
TM International Business Machines Corp.