

Windo Watch



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Forgetting for a moment the proprietary stance that *my software is better than your software*, the Internet has forced all of us to learn a little about *foreign* system platforms.

The Internet is pushing us to reluctantly acknowledge that systems other than the one we happen to use, do have commendable strengths; strengths we hope will be incorporated into the system of our own individual choice. We also know that there are institutions and business which regularly must cope with the problems of multi-platform connectivity.

With that said, WindoWatch is printing as a primer, an information piece or a White Paper developed by and for the Apple Corporation on the subject of OpenDocs. It was written about three years ago. Since that time the movement toward the OpenDocs approach has been very slow. Not dead in the water, but slow!

Recently Steve Jobs of the NEXT Corporation has begun spinning his web (no pun intended) about objects for the WEB. WebObjects have everyone very interested because it appears that Jobs has created another winner. The Internet is beginning to show a semblance of commercial reality with its illusive hope of very big bucks as the prize. Jobs has talked to everyone from the TOYS money men to Microsoft while leaving a trail of interviews directed at thee and me.

OpenDocs is a natural for the Internet. I was familiar with parts of the OpenDocs approach but confess to an over-whelming ignorance about some basic OpenDocs concepts. Given our commitment to provide our readers substantial and thought provoking material, we hope that you'll give the OpenDocs White Paper a solid look see and then tell us what you think.

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The Internet Appliance Revisited

Internet Appliances

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One of the more interesting, if less widely known, vision of the future has to do with what our future computers will look like. If we take to an extreme the concept of *network-centric computing*, some people predict that the computers of the future will become much smaller, dumber, and cheaper than what we use today. This includes taking into account the drop in the cost of computing power accessories and connections to just about everything and everywhere one can imagine using the various network options.

This premise is offered because some people believe that the computers of the future will contain little of permanence and will rely on intelligent agents somewhere out in the network to do the real work. Tomorrow's computers would be merely access devices, not actual computing devices in the current sense of the word. They would become more akin to personal digital assistants (PDAs), which we keep hearing about as the next wave of computing, but have yet to arrive. One company calls their version of these devices an Internet appliance.

I am skeptical that any of this will happen in the way that some people are predicting. Yes, there will be appliances of the type people talk about that you can buy, and yes, they will be compact, cheap, and powerful. However, I doubt that they will become the preferred means of computing for most people. In this article, I will cover some

of the predictions of future advances that people have made toward the realization of Internet appliances. We will look at the various obstacles that stand in the way of acceptance and wide usage of these predicted appliances, and where the alternative trends in this area might develop.

Hype

For a short time, there was tremendous hype in the media about Internet appliances. Oracle went so far as to announce that they were developing a small box to connect to the Internet that would cost about \$500 and be available in the summer of this year. Its apparent purpose was to connect to the Internet cheaply and easily, permitting you to do anything that a Web browser allowed, but much easier to set up and use than an ordinary computer. To meet this price ceiling, the appliance would connect to a TV set and use it for a display.

According to some proponents, this device was going to take the world by storm just as personal tape players did more than a decade ago. Because you and I are more computer literate than the target market for these appliances, we can see several big stumbling blocks before this vision of Internet computing can come to pass.

First, there has to be easy and ubiquitous high speed access to and from the Internet or some similar network *cloud*. With the deregulation of the communications industry, cable companies are jumping right in with the accurate claim that they have more high speed bandwidth into homes than anybody else. However, they have many problems getting data back from the home to the network *cloud*. Also, cable companies have not yet developed the infrastructure to efficiently handle one-to-one traffic over their system. Telephone

companies have high speed access between parts of themselves and have the necessary infrastructure to allow establishing and managing many one-to-one connections at a time. Even so, their bandwidth into the home is still mostly limited to the ordinary copper telephone line. ISDN is still expensive and not widely available. Both sectors of the communications industry are rapidly converging because they are both targeting the same market segment with different technology.

Another complicating factor is that the first generations of Internet appliances are planning to use a TV set as the main output device. If you remember back to the beginnings of the personal computer revolution, computers like the Commodore, Atari, and other *home* computers used a TV for their output too. Today's TV sets are better than those of a decade ago, but fundamentally, they are designed to handle the same signal developed some thirty-five years ago when color TV was first standardized by the FCC. This means they are limited to lower image quality than what a VGA monitor is required to deliver. People are now familiar enough with computer to expect a certain minimal quality. A TV just won't deliver it!

The remaining obstacle that I am going to mention is usability. In a prior article (WindoWatch Vol.1 No.3), I wrote at length about computers in general and what they require to be defined as an appliance. An Internet appliance, to meet the requirements to earn the appellation *appliance*, needs to be no harder to use than a TV set or an oven. It has to be just as reliable, rugged, and goof-proof as any one of these more traditional household appliances. Admittedly, home electronics has become more complicated , but the basics of operating a TV are still fairly simple and can be figured out by most people without the use of manuals. If you read between the lines of hype in the press and marketing, an Internet appliance is expected to be a Web

browser, document viewer, and mail/newsgroup handler. The assumption is that this set of interfaces will be so ubiquitous, be so simply designed, and so reliable, that anyone can use one without formal training or lots of experimentation. People who otherwise would not get a computer could be expected to buy one of these Internet appliances.

Another Path

How many of you have a pager? Raise your hand if you have a cellular phone. The percentage of people having either or both is rapidly rising. In not too many years, there will be nationwide coverage even in isolated areas and near saturation of the market. It doesn't take too much to imagine the fusion of the two into one device. It would fit into the palm of your hand without too many buttons, and runs on batteries for a relatively long period of time. It's already now practical to put into a device of that size, several megabytes of memory and run it off of batteries. Derivatives of Intel's 386 CPU now drain tiny amounts of power and are no larger than several lumps of sugar. It's certainly not hard to see where this could lead. Essentially, I'm talking about the melding of PDAs, cellular phones, and paging technology into one little gadget not much larger than a personal stereo.

Further, I'll bet you haven't heard much about PDAs these days. Several companies came and went, developing the idea and watching it crumble in the marketplace. The reason that you haven't heard much about PDAs recently isn't that they have failed and disappeared as much as the manufacturers discovered that there were those who were interested in PDAs and were willing to pay for them. But this interest was not coming from consumers. If you've ever walked through a supermarket at night when they are doing the daily spot inventory,

you'll see gadgets in the hands of the stock people. They're using PDAs for inventory management and ordering. The same thing is happening in warehouses and shipping offices of major companies. In essence, these devices are PDAs designed for special purpose use and tightly focused for that use. They do their job very well and are easy to run. The technology they use varies, but the effect is the same.

There is a small electronic device that can call up data from a central computer and display it. There is limited means for entering data into the central computer from the device, -all without wires. If you think that this is beginning to sound like pagers and cellular phone, you're right.

Looking into the Crystal Ball

The Internet appliance is just one version of a type of device that probably first appeared to the public in the form of Dick Tracy's watch. It's an easy to use, rugged, reliable, and highly portable computing and communicating device. It might not be able to do a lot, but what it does, it does really well. How soon will it be before Seiko sells such a device? Timex's DataLink already is an ultra compact PIM in a watch. Seiko has had a TV in a watch for years now.

Personal organizers with paging and cellular phone capability are only as far away as having enough people wanting one to justify making a few hundred thousand. The technology is here today. Small computers like the HP 200LX, Zaurus, and other such personal devices are about to merge. Will these devices be able to access the Internet?

Undoubtedly, someone is already doing it today. It'll be a few years before many people will do it, but the devices will be based on per-

sonal organizers, pagers, and cellular phones, and not dumbed down PCs as some people believe.

Herb Chong does programming research. He is the Contributing Editor of [WindoWatch](#) and has authored many articles for us representing the broad range of his interests and expertise. He is the keeper and primary contributor of the [WindoWatch Art Gallery](#) always available on the [WindoWatch](#) home page.

3/ 01/ 96-Copyright 1996 by Business Wire; [CallWare Technologies](#) connects over 200 telephone systems to the Internet; Corporations can deploy worldwide voice messaging without long-distance charges . [CallWare Technologies](#), introduced its Internet integration, the first to link corporate telephone systems with the Internet allowing users of its voice system to retrieve and send Internet voice messages.

The company plans to utilize the Internet as a partner -- complementing its voice processing system by integrating over 200 existing telephone systems with the Internet. The technology introduced gives users two-way voicemail through any Internet connection in the world, eliminating long distance charges. Until now voice messaging on the Internet occurred between individual computers having the same software application installed on both machines. CallWare is the first provider allowing the caller to leave Internet voice messages thru a PBX or key system, with the ease of a telephone. Users can also speak through their computer with a multimedia device as a telephone to leave messages.

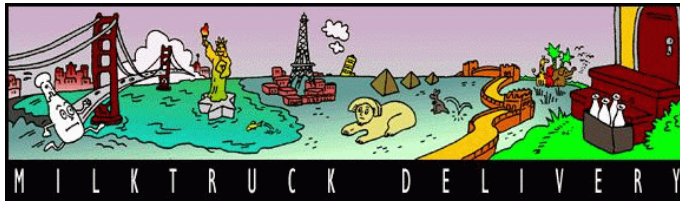
Another example is when voice messages are in a mailbox, using the Internet, the employee can retrieve the message, pass it on to someone else and by turning on their message waiting light, giving them notification through a pager -- all at no charge. CallWare recently finished as a finalist in the McGraw-Hill/LAN TIMES "Best of Show" judging during the Fall NetWorld+Interop tradeshow. For more information call 801/486-9922.

MilkTruck Delivery

Copyright 1996 by John M. Campbell

"Surfing the Web" can be fascinating, but there *are* frustrations. Top of the list are all of those links. Where do they lead? It isn't hard to spend an hour, or more, exploring a myriad of links from a single Web page. If only the computer could capture everything while you were eating breakfast, so you could peruse the information at leisure (like taping a favorite TV show to watch at a more opportune time). Still another problem, once you have found an interesting site, and visit it again, which links have changed content or even more crucial, lead back to the original page? You are tempted to check them all again, just in case! And then, perhaps the greatest frustration! One day you find the ultimate Web page; one full of great links to a wealth of information. If only you could show this wonderful stuff to your non-connected friends.

Fortunately, there is a solution to these vexations. A new breed of browser *enhancements* recently have appeared on the scene. These programs can retrieve a Web page, and all links on that page, making it possible to browse the linked pages offline. And since everything is stored on your hard drive, you can transport pages and their links to any computer for viewing, regardless of whether that machine has an Internet connection. All that is needed on the other computer is a Web Browser, such as Netscape or Mosaic.



One such program is "Milktruck Delivery," from Milktruck, LLC. This software is still in beta. V 1.0b2 was released too late for this article, so the version I will be describing is v 1.0b1.

The entire program is contained within a SETUP.EXE file of about 546K. I installed Milktruck under Windows 95, but since this beta is a 16-bit app, it should work equally well with Windows 3.x, except that certain 16-bit browsers are more difficult to configure for Milktruck. There is an extensive help system, made up entirely of linked HTM files. These guide one through the configuration process with a minimum of pain. One nice touch - each help screen has links to all of the major features - at both the top and bottom of the page. These features include: *The Doorstep, Maintenance, Package Design, Options, Special Delivery Sites, and Help Contents.*

The first step in using Milktruck is configuring your browser. When first run, the program presents a list of browsers that can be automatically launched and configured. These include Emissary, Spry's Mosaic, NCSA Mosaic 2.0 or later, Quarterdeck Mosaic, and the 32-bit versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape. Other browsers may work, but they must be configured manually. The process is explained in the documentation. While I don't pretend to understand all of the technicalities, it works something like this. When you enter a URL and click *go*, your browser must be configured to look for an http *proxy* before accessing the Internet. With Milktruck,

this proxy is set to be your own computer. This means if the requested site is already stored on your machine, Milktruck will return it to the browser. Otherwise, it will go to the Internet to fetch the requested page.

Once configured, Milktruck brings up *The Doorstep* page. This is the jumping-off point of the program. Here, you see details of the sites you have subscribed to using Milktruck. Navigate these sites, see pages in a site that haven't been read yet, look at an outline of a site's contents, and request delivery of a site. What is involved in subscribing to a site? For Milktruck to operate, you have to tell the program's home site, milktruck.com, what you want to retrieve. That site then connects to the requested URL's to retrieve the information, which is then *packaged* and delivered to your computer.

Several pre-packaged sites are already available on the *Special Delivery* page. These include, among others: ESPN, Hotwired, Infoworld, NBA Basketball, PC Week, The Wall Street Journal, and Women's Wire. For these sites, it is only necessary to click on a *Subscribe* button. If a choice of linked pages is offered for a particular site, a box pops up showing the selections available. You can then choose which links you want to retrieve. Some sites, like The Wall Street Journal, require that you first subscribe to them. For those, you must go to the site directly and complete the required information, then choose a password. Your username and password, once assigned, are then plugged into a dialog box in Milktruck and sent to milktruck.com as part of the package for that site.

Choosing non-packaged sites involves a bit more work. This is where the "Package Design" page is used. Here, you provide Milktruck with the following information:

Required Values

Package Name:

Start Page:

Dig Level:

Digging Boundary:

Get Page Extensions:

Get Inline Extensions:

If you wish to place limits on this site, set one or both:

Limit size to under: or items (pages and graphics)

1. A name for the new package. Choose any name you like. I decided to try a "Strouds CWS Apps" site, and named the package "Strouds CWS Apps - New."

2. The URL for the desired start page for the site. Normally, for the site O chose, this would be "http://cws.wilmington.net," but in this case, the "What's New" page for Stroud is a link on the home page - "http://cws.wilmington.net/new.html," so I used that instead.

3. The "Dig Level." Just how far do you want to dig into linked pages? Level 0 fetches only the desired start page for the site. Level 1 retrieves not only the start page, but all hyperlink pages referred to on the start page. Level 2 will get you everything referenced above, plus all pages referred to on the Level 1 pages. Note that the number of hyperlinks increases very rapidly as you dig further, so be careful! Fortunately, you can limit the amount of information retrieved when you reach the final step below.

4. Digging Boundary. Here, you specify whether Milktruck is to limit its retrieval to links within the starting directory of the site, or reach into subdirectories, or include the entire site domain, or follow links across the whole Internet.

5. The final steps involve telling Milktruck whether to fetch inline graphics and sounds on pages. You specify the file extensions you are willing to receive, such as gif, mov, au, etc. As a last step, you have the opportunity to limit the overall package to a certain page or byte maximum.

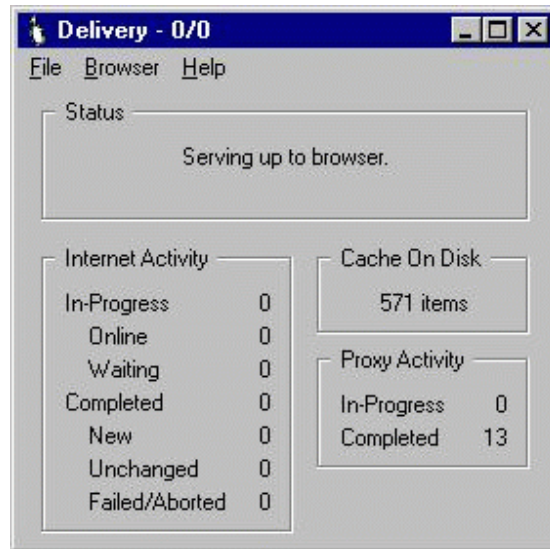
I found that the product worked pretty much as advertised. There was one glitch though. I could not retrieve anything past the first page of the Wall Street Journal, even though I had plugged in my username and password as directed. Infoworld came through with flying colors. I was able to read everything in the current issue offline. The same with Stroud's New apps. I was able to click on any link, read the short description page, then go to the full review. It was nice to have all of the links I clicked on appear almost instantly. Of course, they should load quickly, since they were now resident on my hard drive.



A cute touch - milk jar icons display the state of each site after a download. The jars are either downward (empty). running (delivery in progress), or upright (full- site retrieved)

Milktruck has a maintenance page that provides all the statistics relevant to every delivered site. Here, I discovered, among other things, that the Stroud package was made up of 385 items totaling two

mb, and was transmitted in 14 min., 59 sec. This page is also the place where you can update and change delivery options for sites, or discontinue delivery of sites you no longer wish to receive.



One feature I haven't touched on yet is the Monitor Window. This window is external to your browser, and shows the progress of the Milktruck server in delivering information to your computer, and how many of pages are being loaded for delivery. It also shows new and unchanged pages, and aborted attempts to fetch a requested page.

All in all, Milktruck is a fascinating and useful adjunct to one's arsenal of Web accessories. The one serious deficiency of the beta

release is that it is limited to only two sites that are not pre-packaged. Of course, that is sufficient for testing.

For the software to be really useful, the commercial release will have to permit users to specify a large number of sites of their own choosing for delivery.

John M. Campbell writes about a variety of Internet issues. He earns his living as the Manager of the Unemployment Compensation Office of Elkins, WV. He is a regular contributor to [WindoWatch](#) and is the Co-Host of the Ilink Browser Conference.

POWERPOINT VS FREELANCE

Copyright 1996 by Frank McGowan

Those who are keeping track of such things say that most people fear public speaking more than they fear death. I suspect this has something to do with death being more of an abstraction than public speaking, making it somehow less real.

There is nevertheless a truth underlying this supposed fact: most of us would rather face a firing squad than a live audience. Not known for allowing a human foible such as this to pass without mining it for all the profit it contains, software creators have been busily dreaming up ways to persuade us to part with our hard-earned dollars. They promise that their presentation application will

- (a) create dog and pony shows so dazzling our audiences won't notice that we're suffer-ing a near-terminal case of flopsweat and
- (b) virtually assure us of a meteoric rise up the corporate ladder once our boss sees how brilliantly we've presented his product.

Phrases like *professional looking, appealing, easy to grasp, - stunning, powerful*, even *jazzy* litter the users' guides of these packages. Indeed, the blurbs barely stop short of promising glossier skin, better muscle tone and a greatly enhanced love life.

While I've dabbled a bit with Bravo, and have a nodding acquaintance with Harvard Graphics, I've spent the past few weeks intensely scrutinizing PowerPoint and Freelance, looking for minute details that might give one of them the advantage over the other. Feeling a bit like the mountain that labored to give forth the mouse, here goes! I decided to look at the following factors when making my evaluations:

- User documentation**
- Learning curve**
- Ease of creating a new presentation**
- Ease in modifying an existing presentation**
- Special effects**
- Special features**

Taking them in order:

User Documentation

Again, my background in technical documentation requires that I put this as the highest priority. Considering how few of us actually bother to look at the manual until all else has failed, it may be time to reconsider my priorities. Nevertheless, both manuals adhere to the principle of *second person, active voice*. You are never left in doubt about what to do, or who's doing what. Instructions are direct and unambiguous:

"Click Choose Scheme," and "Click the Text icon" for example. I found the Freelance manual well done; easy on the eyes, and quite readable without resorting to Dick and Jane diction. In tone, it strikes a nice balance between user-friendly and cloying. The Power-

point manual strikes me as business-like, bordering on plain vanilla. The tone is straightforward, and the book contains very few frilly touches. One nice one, however, is the keyboard shortcut summary printed on the back cover. I looked in vain for such a summary in the Freelance manual. Score one for PowerPoint.

Learning Curve

My volunteer subject (my wife, Sue) found PowerPoint easy to learn, but we have to point out that she was using a book from an educational textbook publisher, not Microsoft's User Guide. She was able to grasp the essentials of creating and modifying a PowerPoint presentation in about two hours. Unfortunately, I had no volunteer to test the ease of learning Freelance, so I had to do it myself. I found that Freelance also offers a shallow learning curve (that is, one that's easily scaled). I enjoyed the animated tutorial, and also liked having the QuickStart tutorial button on the startup screen, along with the usual stuff. I also like the ? for Help, in case you're having trouble understanding what the startup screen is supposed to do for you.

Ease of Creating a New Presentation

Each makes it relatively simple to put together an uncomplicated presentation. Interestingly, Sue found it easier to create a new PowerPoint presentation without invoking the Wizard (sorry about that, Wizard wizards). Neither Freelance nor PowerPoint get a clearcut edge here.

Ease in Modifying an Existing Presentation

Again, there's no obvious winner in this area. Editing existing text

and objects, and adding new or different objects are done easily on both Freelance and PowerPoint.

Special Effects

In this category I include bending text and choosing transitions. In the "bent text" class, I give the edge to Freelance. It's a much less complicated process to specify curved text. Just select the text, go to the Text menu, click Curved Text and choose your flavor. With PowerPoint you have to use Word Art, type in the text, then go to the Word Art toolbar to choose the effect. It seems a bit cumbersome compared with the Freelance approach. While the selection of transitional effects is easier in PowerPoint, the results don't seem as dramatic as Freelance's. I really liked the Shade and Curtain transitions. It's also easier in Freelance to make the transition 'global' across all slides in the presentation. Once you've specified View, Screen Show, you can simply select the transition you want and click the checkbox "Effect All Pages." In PowerPoint you have to select all the slides, then apply the transition to each. And, in my version at least, the choices vary from the Transition dialog box to the slide sorter: there are few transition effects when you opt to use the slide sorter view (Uncover is not among those listed in the drop down list). Score another point for Freelance!

Special Features

What PowerPoint calls Clipart, Freelance calls Symbols. A rose by any other name will still be a picture or an object or a ? Freelance's art categories are plentiful, but could have used more choices within

some categories - why not a bull and a bear in the animal category for instance? And why a snake?? I don't think PowerPoint has a snake in its gallery, nor can I see any reason it should! (I confess to an almost morbid fear of these creatures: I set an unofficial land speed record getting away from a half-frozen rattlesnake in New Mexico several decades ago - I think I was almost to the Texas border before I slowed down.) Score one for PowerPoint. I am inclined to give Freelance the advantage in exporting text to other applications. I decided to jot down my notes within the presentations I created with each package as I went along, and then bring them over to the Word file when it was time to do the actual writing. I found that Freelance let me do this by simply clicking the object box that contained my text, and then copy/paste to get the text to this Word file. To my pleasant surprise, the text was pasted in in exactly the same font as the one I'm using for the Word file.

PowerPoint on the other hand copied and pasted the object itself, not the text contained within. I was able to accomplish this, but only by selecting the text within the object first. It would seem that it never occurred to anyone that somebody might want to take text from PPT and use it in Word. You can do it, but you have to work a little harder. Another point for Freelance.

Summary

I found a couple of areas where PowerPoint had the edge, and couple where Freelance came out the winner. But overall, it's a draw. Sigh. Why can't anything be clearly black & white? Well, actually, it can. See, you have the option to...aah, never mind!

Frank McGowan is a teacher, computer consultant, technical writer and editor. He is also a regular ***WindoWatch*** contributor. This is the last installment of his series on the Suites from Lotus and Microsoft.

What a Software Bug Can Do!

Computer Horror Stories
From Derek Buchler

Software Engineering Notes (SEN), a journal of the Association for Computer Machinery, regularly publishes lists of computer horror stories. Some of these are well-known, while others have never been independently verified. This summary gives the SEN volume/issue, and the date of the event, if known. SEN also reports computer break-ins, embezzlements, etc. Such malicious events are omitted here.

SEN References	Description	Date of Event
4/4	Bug in brake computer system caused recall of all El Dorado automobiles	
5/1	Arthritis-therapy microwaves set patient's heart pacemaker to 214, resulting in fatal coronary	
5/2	Mariner 18 lost due to missing NOT in program	
5/2	F16 autopilot flipped plane upside down whenever it crossed the equator	
5/3	50 false alerts from NORAD defense system	1979
6/1	Many computer system outages at FAA Air Traffic	

Control

- 6/3 Air New Zealand crash in Antarctica when computer data error detected but crew was not informed 11/ 1979**
- 6/5 Backup computer synchronization problem delayed first Shuttle launch**
- 8/3 NORAD defense radar system mistook the Moon for a hostile incoming missile**
- 8/3 Computer bug showed ghost train near Embarcadero station on San Francisco Muni 5/ 1983**
- 8/3 Software bug caused F14 to fly off the end of an aircraft carrier into the North Sea**
- 8/3 HMS Sheffield radar system identified incoming Argentinian Exocet missile as non-Soviet and thus friendly; no alarm was raised and the ship sank.**
- 8/5 F18 computer opened missile retention clamp, fired missile and re-closed clamp before missile had had enough time to move away from aircraft**
- 8/5 San Francisco BART doors opened while train was at full speed; control system's inter-station delay time was too short for TransBay Tunnel**
- 8/5 United Airlines 767 iced up because fuel-saving computer was over-efficient, causing engines to cool down too much on approach to Denver Aug 1983**

- 8/5 Mariner 1 launch failed due to period instead of
comma in FORTRAN program DO statement 1962**

- 8/5 Computer error caused US naval vessel to open Jul 1983
fire 180 degrees off target, in the direction of
Mexican merchant ship**

- 9/1 Gemini V splashed down 100 miles off target when
program used 360 degrees for Earth's rotation in
one day, i.e. ignoring its movement around the Sun**

- 9/1 Vancouver Stock Exchange Index rose by 50% when 1983
two years of round-off errors in computer program
were corrected**

- 9/5 Viking spacecraft had misaligned antenna due to
faulty code patch**

- 9/5 F16 computer deadlocked, confusing left & right
while plane was inverted**

- 10/1 Faulty computer modelling of weather led to ill- 1983
advised damming of Colorado River, resulting in
severe flooding during spring thaws.**

- 10/2 "Compatible" teller machines of 2 British banks Jan 1985
handled leap years differently, withholding cash
and confiscating cards during New Year holiday**

- 10/2 180 degree heading error caused Soviet test Dec 1984**

missile to aim for Hamburg instead of the Arctic

- | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------------|
| 10/2 | Faulty automatic dialup on Coke machines tied up phone system in North Carolina municipal offices | 1\ 1985 |
| 10/2 | Department store anti-theft microwave device reprogrammed heart pacemaker, killing its user | Jul 1981 |
| 10/2 | Autopilot error caused China Airlines 747 to stall near San Francisco | Feb 1985 |
| 10/3 | Robot killed Japanese auto worker attempting to repair another robot | Jul 1981 |
| 10/3 | AT&T software bug knocked out all long-distance phone service to Greece | 1979 |
| 10/3 | Shuttle laser experiment failed because computer data was in nautical miles instead of feet | Jun 1985 |
| 10/3 | Woman killed daughter & tried suicide after computer incorrectly diagnosed incurable disease | |
| 10/3 | Federal Reserve inter-bank transaction amounts multiplied by 1000 because data input procedures were inconsistent between client banks | |
| 10/3 | Computer error caused nuclear reactor in Florida to overheat | Feb 1980 |

**10/3 KAL flight 007 strayed, shot down due to heading Sep 1983
being mistyped into autopilot**

**10/3 14000 Ford Lincolns recalled because a computer in
air suspension system had overheating problem,
causing automobile to burst into flames**

A *Derek Buchler* contribution of interesting computer glitches, surprises and humor.

First Impressions!

A Very Brief Look ! **Procomm Plus for Windows 3.0....**

Copyright 1996 by Gregg Hommel

What's Hot....

- 1) A more or less integrated QWK reader, based on the shareware reader called WaveRider from author Doug Crocker. (Doug and Sue Crocker now work for Datastorm). More or less integrated because it can be run without running PCP/Win 3.0, but is integrated into the default tool bar as an icon.**
- 2) Improved Fax capabilities and reliability, along with OCR for fax files, with integration via macros to most major word processors.**
- 3) Full Internet capability, from WWW. A browser based on Spyglass Mosaic 2.0, to email, newsgroups, FTP, and Telnet supporting Zmodem file transfers.**
- 4) The dialing directory now includes settings for all of the above, and switching modes is as simple as clicking on a tool bar icon, and selecting which mode you want.**
- 5) Setup now mimics Win95, with tabbed dialogs for everything. Improved navigation of setup items via those tabbed dialogs.. if you want to set a fax item, you select that tab, same for Internet, etc.**

6) Likely most important.. it functions, apparently, well under any OS, from Win 3.1 through Win NT and OS/2.

7) PCP/Win 3.0 is available on a CD-ROM, which makes installation a breeze, much simpler than the eleven or twelve high density floppies required...

What's Not....

1) The QWK reader lacks some of the functionality of the shareware version put out by the Crockers. It is usable, but not as good as it could be or regrettably, as good as it was.

2) Fax - fax files saved from PCP/Win 2.xx can not be read by PCP/Win 3.0. There has been a change in the fax header info, and the PCP/Win 3.0 install does not convert any fax files found. There is a script on their forum on Compuserve (not a Datastorm script, but one written by a user) which can convert your fax files to the new format, but it isn't an automatic part of the install of PCP/Win 3.0, nor Datastorm supported.

3) The Web browser does not support a lot of the current stuff, like frames, Java, etc. It does support a lot of the HTML 3.0 and Netscape extensions, but is still behind the times when it comes to the latest goodies on the Internet.

4) I found most of the Internet stuff slow, in particular the Web browser, compared to the standards like Netscape 2.0 (16 bit) or MSIE 2.0 (32 bit), especially.

- 5) Setup still lacks in the *intuitive* department. It is better, but...
- 6) Scripts written under PCP/Win 1.0x or 2.xx are not compatible (again!), and must be converted and re-compiled. The converter does a fair to middling job, but adds an enormous amount of extra code to do so. As with PCP/Win 2.0, once you convert, look forward to a fair job of cleaning up your scripts.
- 7) NO WASP MANUAL! NONE! It isn't even available at extra cost! Datastorm has decided that the online help files are sufficient for all levels of Wasp programmers, and they have ceased printing the Wasp manual for anyone. For obvious reasons, this one is pretty important to me!
- 8) A full install requires at least 35 megs of HDD real estate! I suggest that anyone installing it use the Custom install option, and install only what they need or want, to save the gobbling up of their drive! Look carefully at what is offered, and choose what you want.
- 9) If you install PCP/Win 3.0 in the same directory as your current PCP/Win 2.xx, and the install fails to complete for whatever reason, you will end up without a working copy of either version, and likely will have to re-install. The better choice, at install time for PCP/Win 3.0, if you have the hard drive space, is the option which installs it in a new directory, keeping your old PCP/Win 2.xx version installed, and converts the dialing directories and script files to the new version.
- 9) In my opinion, compared to PCP/Win 2.xx which was, in truth, no speed demon, PCP/Win 3.0 is slow, in all functions. Load times are much extended, script execution for larger scripts appears to be

slower, the Internet applications are slow to load, and slow to run..... In overall terms, slower than PCP/Win 2.xx in all respects.

In any case, there will be a full and complete review of the shipping version of PCP/Win 3.0 will appear in this magazine at a later date...

Gregg Hommel is a regular WindoWatch contributor providing our readership with his online Wasp tutorials. He was also a DataStorm beta tester for this latest version of their product.

Editorial note:

This popular communications software has not delivered the latest 32bit tools! The loudest complaint about Procomm for Windows v.3 is that it has been written for 16bit Windows operating systems. Yes, it does run under Windows95 but provides none of the bells and whistles that '95 users have come to expect. Although DataStorm has promised a 32bit version by the end of the year it may be too late for this company to retain its reputation as a communications software leader and still land on its feet in this very competitive Internet oriented market place. *lbl*

What is OpenDoc?

Shaping Tomorrow's Software

A White Paper copyright 1993 by the Apple Corp.

The OpenDoc Architecture

Apple, WordPerfect, Novell, Borland and IBM share a common goal of making the user's computing experience as easy and productive as possible, and that goal has become increasingly elusive. People are using personal computers for more and more complex tasks, often involving multiple programs and even a variety of media. In addition, they are increasingly working together on computer-based projects. This means that the earlier, individual desktop computer model is shifting to one of shared, collaborative computing resources; a shift that demands new capabilities. Finally, there is a growing demand for customization capabilities to meet the increasingly specialized needs of today's computer users.

The OpenDoc(tm) architecture represents Apple's approach toward reducing the complexity of computing today, while supporting the development of tomorrow's advanced, flexible applications. It is an open architecture, designed to integrate software and enable sharing across multiple computer platforms; providing users with a new level of computing power, flexibility, and ease of use.

This approach evolves desktop computing by providing an object-based framework for developing applications that are fully integrated and interoperable across platforms and distributed networks.

Background

Ten years ago, most of what people did with computers centered around text and numbers. The graphical nature of the Apple Macintosh computer brought a new emphasis on working with graphics on the computer, because the graphics-based user interface allowed easy manipulation, editing, and integration of words and images.

Today, however, many computer users engage in the creation of what can be called compound documents; documents with parts containing various media, such as text, tables, movies, sound and graphics in a variety of file formats. Currently, each medium requires users to work in different ways, and often in separate applications or editors, demanding a labor-intensive series of actions to move data from each creator application to the final document. This lengthy and cumbersome process tends to be error-prone and frustrating.

Today's computing world encourages an ever-increasing complexity in successive releases of most applications, because developers are under constant competitive pressure to add more features to their products. The result is paradoxical: as applications become more powerful in terms of features, they also become more difficult to use - and hence less useful to people. In addition, they require more time and effort to develop, enhance, and maintain.

OpenDoc is a compound document architecture that addresses these issues by reducing the complexity and increasing the flexibility of software for both end users and developers. It offers an evolutionary approach to restructuring software into independent modules, or *parts*, which can be flexibly combined in a variety of ways. The result

is an entirely different way of both using and writing personal computer software; one that offers a number of significant benefits.

Benefits to the User

For end users, OpenDoc will simplify and streamline the computing experience, while ensuring a much higher level of flexibility and customizability. Specifically, OpenDoc offers the following user benefits:

Easy creation of compound documents:

OpenDoc is designed to handle current and future types of media. Users can place any kind of media into an OpenDoc document using the familiar cut-and-paste or drag-and-drop manipulation.

Editing *in place*:

With OpenDoc, users can edit any type of content within a single document, without having to cut and paste between different application windows.

Powerful document management:

Rather than manually assembling the various pieces of a document, users can let an OpenDoc document hold all of them. This reduces the task of managing files, and facilitates document exchange and updating. As documents are edited, changes are tracked through drafts, ensuring greater data integrity and allowing users to work on shared documents without content loss from version to version.

Cross-platform support:

Because OpenDoc is designed to offer full interoperability between platforms, OpenDoc users will be able to share and interact with

complex documents, regardless of differences in software or hardware, or which platform the document resides on.

Consistency of operation:

Because users can specify preferred part editors, they need learn only one way to edit each type of data; for example, using the same text editor for word processing, entering spreadsheet data, or labeling diagrams.

Uniformity of interface:

OpenDoc defines a consistent user interface for embedding and manipulating all kinds of media in documents.

Scalability:

The OpenDoc human interface addresses a wide range of users, from novices to experts. No class of user has to understand the additional functionality typically used at the next level; novices can create compound documents easily, while experts can experience nearly unlimited potential.

Plug-and-play solutions.

With OpenDoc, vendors will be able to assemble collections of parts into solution sets that target specific tasks or work styles, such as a legal publishing bundle, allowing users to choose the solutions most appropriate to their needs.

Access to object services:

OpenDoc will be based on the industry-standard CORBA (Common Object Request Broker Architecture) object technology. This will allow users to take advantage of a wide range of distributed services working consistently across many different CORBA-compliant desktop and server systems.

To more clearly understand the benefits OpenDoc provides to the user, let's examine a usage scenario that most computer users can relate to; the use of text editors.

End-user scenario:

Most applications today -whether word processors, spreadsheets, databases, or more specialized tools - include text editing capabilities. Some rely heavily on text editing, such as WordPerfect or Claris MacWrite. Some use text only incidentally, such as Claris MacProject, WordPerfect Office or Microsoft Excel. Unfortunately for the user, all differ in their details. For example, some allow text styles, some don't. Some offer tab stops, some don't, and so on. In addition to such details, they also differ in functionality and mode of operation. The result? If you use six different programs, you need to learn six different ways to do the same task: edit text.

With OpenDoc, a text paragraph becomes a software module, usable wherever text is needed. You could take your favorite text editor and use it whenever you needed to work with text. Applications built in this way would have an important characteristic: they would simultaneously be simpler and more powerful. They would be simpler because you would have to learn only one way to do something. And they would be more powerful because you always have the option of choosing a fully functional module, replacing less capable ones.

Benefits to the Developer:

The OpenDoc architecture also offers developers a number of important benefits:

Faster, more efficient development. Software developers can reuse already developed parts, eliminating the need to start from scratch with each development effort. This ability to reuse existing parts also means that developers need spend less time on parts that are peripheral to their main area of expertise.

Reduction of application complexity. Because OpenDoc parts are independent of one another, a collection of parts that is less complex than the large, monolithic applications of today can offer equivalent functionality.

Diminished costs of software development. The fact that parts are smaller than applications makes them both quicker and cheaper to write, which reduces the penalties for failure.

Industry-standard object mechanism. Because parts can use a CORBA-compliant object mechanism (see above), they can be written in a wide range of programming languages and development will be supported by many tool vendors. This mechanism gives developers high performance coupled with great flexibility in the use of “plug-and-play” objects.

Developer scenario:

Today, a developer who wants to create even a highly specialized tool such as a three-dimensional modeling and rendering program has to spend time developing a text editor, so that users can enter specifications and label their diagrams. But, as a developer of such a program, you would much rather concentrate on your specific area of expertise.

In the OpenDoc world, you would have two choices for providing functions that fall outside the primary focus of your application: bundle existing parts with your product or rely on the user to provide parts to support those functions. Either way, you are free to concentrate on the competitive value of your product, rather than on peripheral issues. The result is a much more useful, powerful program; developed in a fraction of the time it would have taken using the conventional, monolithic approach.

The Technology:

The OpenDoc architecture is designed to enable the construction of compound, collaborative, and customizable documents, which are interoperable across platforms and with other compound document architectures such as Microsoft's OLE 2.0. It will be an open architecture, with source code available to vendors who want to implement the architecture in their products. The OpenDoc architecture is also flexible, providing replaceable facilities so platform vendors can implement their desired feature set.

Major concepts of the architecture include the following:

Documents

OpenDoc fundamentally changes the meaning of the term document. In today's computing environment, a document has a type, which is tied to the application that will let the user view, edit, and print its content. With OpenDoc, a document is no longer a single block of content bound to a single application, but is instead composed of smaller blocks of content, or parts.

Parts

Parts are the fundamental building blocks in OpenDoc, replacing today's monolithic applications with smaller units of content dynamically bound with related functionality. OpenDoc parts may be viewed in a number of ways:

Content containers: Every part contains data; for example, text parts contain characters, graphics parts contain lines and shapes, spreadsheet parts contain spreadsheet cells with formulas, and video parts contain digitized video. The particular type of data that each part contains is defined by the developer and is known as the part's intrinsic content.

In addition to its intrinsic content, a part may be able to contain other parts. Every document has a single part at its top level, the root part, into which all other parts are embedded. Again, the part developer determines whether to support the capacity to contain other parts; however, a key characteristic of OpenDoc is that if a part can contain one type of part, it can contain all types of parts. This is in stark contrast to the small number of standard data types supported today, such as text, JPEG and TIFF.

Part editors: Part editors are independent programs that manipulate and display a particular kind of content. OpenDoc part editors can serve as components for solution building as well as document building. Plug-and-play solutions assembled from several parts will replace today's monolithic applications.

OpenDoc parts will allow developers to create new applications in a manner similar to that of constructing a document template in today's world.

Frames. Parts can also be viewed as the boundaries at which one kind of content in a document ends and another begins. A key element of the concept of parts is that each part of a document has its own content model; the model of objects and operations that is presented to the user. The content model changes at the frame between parts.

For example, a typical compound document could have as its root part a MacDraw-style graphics editor that provides a letterhead template. It might contain a chart part from one vendor that overlaps with a table part from another vendor to illustrate financial information. The user might embed a clock part, along with a text part that contains a button part.

In addition, such a MacDraw-style part could contain shapes that are not embedded parts at all, but were created by this specific graphics editor; these are called content objects; data elements native to the part. An embedded part is fundamentally distinct from ordinary content elements such as simple shapes, characters, or cells.

Frames: Frames within OpenDoc are areas of the display that represents a part. Frames provide a handle onto parts, allowing them to be manipulated as a whole, as well as allowing the user to see and edit a part's contents.

Although this description of a frame makes it sound much like a standard application window, it is not. Where windows are transitory views, only visible when the part is being edited or its content viewed, a frame is persistent. When a frame is opened into a window, the frame remains visible. When the window is closed, the part returns to the representation from which it was opened. In addition, a frame can often show only a portion of the entire content of a part. Opening a large part into a window allows its the entire part to be viewed and edited.

Part handlers.

In the OpenDoc architecture, part handlers are the rough equivalents of today's applications. When a part is being displayed or edited, a part handler is invoked to perform those tasks. A part handler is responsible for the following things:

Displaying the part both on the screen and for printing purposes.

Editing the part. The part handler must accept events and change the state of the part so that the user can edit and script the part.

Storage management (both persistent and runtime) for the part. The part handler must be able to read the part from persistent storage into main memory, manage the runtime storage associated with the part, and write the part back out to persistent storage.

Part handlers are dynamically linked into the runtime world of the document, based on the part types that appear in the document. Because any sort of part might appear in any document at any time, the part handlers must be dynamically linked to provide a smooth user experience.

Part handlers can be divided into two types, editors and viewers:

An editor displays a part's content and provides a user interface for modifying that content. This user interface may include menus, controls, tool palettes, rulers, and other modes of interaction.

A viewer offers a subset of an editor's functionality; it allows users to display and print a part's content, but not to edit it. Viewers can be useful in two document sharing situations: when the recipient of a

document does not hold a license to some of the kind of parts included in the document, or when the person sending the document does not want the recipient to alter it.

Both editors and viewers can interpret the contents of the part and display that content for the user. The idea is that, eventually, developers will create both kinds of handler for every part. The editor would be sold, but the viewer would be freely distributed, to enable and encourage document interchange.

Storage.

Storage is a major feature of OpenDoc. The existence of multipart documents necessitates a persistent storage mechanism that enables multiple part handlers to share a single document file effectively.

The OpenDoc storage model, based on Apple's Bento(TM) standard, assumes that the storage system can effectively give each part its own data stream; an individual area inside document files specific to part content; and reliable references can be made from one stream to another, enabling parts to be integrated into a single document. Because OpenDoc is designed to support cross-platform capabilities, it must also support the ability to write multiple representations of a given part. Because many pieces of code may need to access a given part, the storage system must support a robust annotation mechanism; one that allows information to be associated with a part without disturbing its format.

The storage system also yields another advantage: collaborative access. OpenDoc provides an architecture that allows developers to create part handlers that let users collaborate on document creation.

Object mechanism. Calling between objects is fundamental to the OpenDoc architecture. OpenDoc will use IBM's System Object Manager (SOM) as its object calling mechanism. SOM provides an efficient, flexible binary standard for object interfaces that conforms to the CORBA industry standard for distributed object messaging.

SOM lets developers create parts in a wide range of languages and lets these parts call each other with no additional effort. SOM also allows developers and users to take advantage of distributed services provided through CORBA-compliant application programming interfaces (APIs.) SOM and CORBA are widely accepted and are well supported by tool and system vendors on many platforms.

The Competition:

Apple is not alone in recognizing the problems with computing today. In fact, we are also far from alone in our efforts to define and implement the OpenDoc architecture. Apple's experience with human computer interaction, WordPerfect's experience in document-centric computing and compound documents, and Novell's expertise in distributed, collaborative systems are all playing a part in the definition and implementation of this technology. In addition, input has been sought for and discussed with many other systems and software vendors, including Borland and IBM, and we expect support from many of these other companies for the OpenDoc architecture. You can expect to see more announcements in the future regarding companies that will be helping implement OpenDoc on additional

platforms and from software vendors who will be supporting OpenDoc APIs in their applications.

We are working closely with independent systems vendors as well as looking toward cooperation with recognized industry associations, such as the Object Management Group (OMG), Open Software Foundation (OSF), and X Consortium. Apple's stated intent is to make OpenDoc technology not only cross-platform but also truly open; with both systems vendors and independent software vendors able to obtain the source code easily.

In contrast, the other major effort along these lines, Microsoft's OLE 2.0, is a proprietary approach. Currently, the OLE 2.0 source code is held by Microsoft, and provided only under Microsoft license. However, OpenDoc will be interoperable with OLE 2.0, so developers can take advantage of OpenDoc's broader feature set and additional supported platforms without sacrificing OLE support.

Part of the work the WordPerfect and Novell OpenDoc teams will be doing is an implementation of OpenDoc on Windows in such a way that it will interoperate with OLE 2.0. Applications that also support the additional capabilities represented in OpenDoc will have the ability to interoperate at a higher level of functionality on Windows or Macintosh, and to interoperate across multiple platforms and distributed systems as well.

Apple, IBM, and Taligent plan to design complete interoperability between OpenDoc and Taligent, similar to the interoperability between OpenDoc and OLE 2.0. This is intended to enable developers and customers to migrate to Taligent without losing their investment in software or legacy information.

In addition to being much more open, OpenDoc offers a number of specific advantages to users and developers:

Human interface.

The OpenDoc human interface reflects Apple's user-centered approach to product design. User testing indicates that OpenDoc is a more comfortable, efficient model for users.

Cleanliness and simplicity of API.

OpenDoc is designed from a minimalist viewpoint; it defines as few as possible, flexible features, with available source code and clean application programming interface.

Network readiness.

OpenDoc handles networking support easily and flexibly. Through IBM's System Object Model and the CORBA industry standard, it will provide access to distributed object services. This aspect of its architecture has been thoroughly reviewed by vendors concerned with distributed systems, such as Novell.

Range of platforms.

OpenDoc will be initially released on the Macintosh and Windows platforms. It is designed to be highly portable and will probably become available on other desktop systems, such as UNIX. OpenDoc is also designed with the future in mind: OpenDoc parts and documents are designed to be interoperable with other compound document systems, such as Taligent.

Consistent object model.

OpenDoc's object model is compliant with the Common Object Request Broker (CORBA) specifications released by the Object Management Group (OMG). OMG is a standards body that has defined CORBA as a common, industry wide specification for access to object services. Because OpenDoc is CORBA-compliant, OpenDoc documents and parts will be able to use CORBA-compliant services and interoperate with other CORBA-compliant architectures.

The Shape of the Future

The benefits of widespread adoption of the OpenDoc architecture are revolutionary for both users and developers. Yet it will be a gentle revolution; one without dramatic upheavals. Because the OpenDoc architecture is designed to work with existing applications and documents, users will benefit from OpenDoc features without disruption. OpenDoc parts will behave much like current applications, enabling customers to upgrade without having to go through a new learning process. As customers become more familiar with the full scope of OpenDoc capabilities; in-place editing, plug-and-play customizing, and more; they will build new, convenient, efficient work environments while maintaining their current computer-software investment.

This is particularly true for users, who will at first experience little or no change, as developers begin to take advantage of the new architecture by binding together parts to form units that are virtually indistinguishable from the applications of today. It is only over time that the full benefits that OpenDoc brings; in-place editing within compound documents, the ability to customize applications by adding or substituting parts, and more; will become obvious.

For developers, the impact will be felt more rapidly. But here, too, the change will not be sudden or disruptive in nature. Developers will simply find that OpenDoc empowers them to work in new ways, enabling them both to concentrate on existing areas of expertise and to develop new ones. OpenDoc will also encourage the vertical market industry, with applications increasingly targeting specialized tasks.

The primary concern for each of these companies remains the experience of the user; not technology for the sake of technology. OpenDocs represents that continuing commitment: to empower people through the provision of technology that is both powerful and easy to use, helping them to take full advantage of the growing capabilities of computing.

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A Guide to Select BBB's via Telnet!

Editorial note: Much of what you read here will soon be published by a division of Prentiss-Hall. Please note the legal mumbo jumbo at the very end of the article. This is proprietary work and can only be reproduced with the author's permission.

WHY ANOTHER INTERNET BBS LIST?

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The answer to this is simple - other internet BBS lists mostly contain government or educational based BBS's. They are not what most BBS'ers would usually call a BBS. BBSs are very diverse and colorful systems that offer just about everything - messages, files, games, chat, and other services - and up until recently, were mostly accessible via long distance phone calls! This is a list of *real* BBS's accessible via TELNET, RLOGIN, or WEB on the Internet.

We feel a good and FREE listing of these systems will not only help promote BS's on the 'net, but also act as an invaluable aid to the new Internet user trying (and sometimes desperately searching) for useful and *fun* systems to visit out in cyberspace. This list does *not* contain any opinions or editorials of the systems listed - it is merely a listing, with details provided (where possible) by the BBS sysops themselves.

How Do I Access These BBS's via the Internet?

This guide is not designed to be a tutorial of how to use the Internet, nor is it a guide to how to get access to the Internet. There are hundreds of help files available on the network, or on your favorite

BBS to help you out. Most of the systems listed in this list offer Internet access, and can be called using a modem and phone line. Once you get setup on one of these systems (or gain access to the Internet through some other means), you can access most of the systems listed by using a "TELNET" client. This works differently for different systems, but one common example would be:

telnet <host name> (ex: telnet boardwatch.com)

or

telnet <ip address> (ex: 199.84.216.1)

Some systems integrate "telnet" into a menu prompt, which after execution will simply ask you to enter the host name or IP address.

Some systems also offer the ability to use RLOGIN for the same purpose as TELNET. I'd suggest you try TELNET first...

Another method is to telnet via a WWW page. If you have access to the Web, you can use this URL - <http://dkeep.com/sbi.htm> You will also need a "telnet" client. Some browsers have them built-in, but most don't. Off of the SBI Home Page is a link to and FTP site with some decent clients.

For Web-based BBSs, you can access them using any graphical WEB browser. I'd recommend Netscape for the highest level of compatibility. Some BBSs require "special" proprietary clients to access them via the net. See the BBS description for details on these systems.

Special Note About File Transfers:

Even though most of the BBS's listed support "outgoing" FTP, many of the "PC" based systems listed here do not support FTP (File Transfer Protocol) TO their PC-Based file systems (which is where most of the files are). One solution for those that use dial-up accounts for their internet access (where the user dials into the service with a PC using a communications package such as Procomm or Qmodem), is to use ordinary "Z-modem" once telnetted into the BBS. However, in order for this to work, you *MUST USE 8-BIT BINARY MODE* for your telnet session, or rlogin using the -8 command line parameter. Different telnet and rlogin clients handle mode settings in their own way, so check with your service, documentation, or look thru your help files to see how this is done. Many telnet clients use "toggle binary" to set 8-bit mode.

I've accomplished transfer rates of 1800 cps via telnet on a 14.4 connection - so it IS possible. Granted, the Internet is a fickle place when it comes to throughput, so your actual rates will vary.

If you are on a "dumb" terminal that is logged into a Host computer (like a mini or mainframe), then you have no file transfer protocols (other than FTP) available to you while in a telnet session, so regular BBS file transfers will not be possible.

File Transfers with SLIP/PPP

For those users with a SLIP/PPP connection, a great program called "ComT" allows you to redirect a comm port to be a telnet socket! This allows you to use ANY standard Windows-based communications software to telnet to an SBI BBS and then use a regular

download protocol (such as Zmodem) for file transfers! The ComT program is available at the dkunix.dkeep.com FTP site as COMT.ZIP.

Shareware.

Another package called "CommNet" has just become available. Unlike ComT, it is a complete communications package in itself, specializing in SLIP/PPP telnet connections. It features a phone book for dial-up AND telnet connections, and supports high speed Zmodem and Ymodem-G file transfers. You can get a "demo" copy via FTP at ftp.radiant.com Registration costs \$34.95.

For OS/2 users, there are communications drivers called "SIO", and a communications interface program called VMODEM. VMODEM, along with the SIO drivers, create a "virtual comm port" (similar to COMT for WIN), that allows any OS/2 communications program to "dial" a telnet address (ie, ATDT129.45.10.2). The drivers and programs can be found at most any OS/2 FTP site, including "hobbes.nmsu.edu" and "ftp-os2.cdrom.com".

There are also several new SLIP (Winsock compatible) TELNET clients with built-in Z-modem! The best of these is Neterm, and is available from the SBI Home page on the WEB. Neterm also has some of the best ANSI-BBS terminal emulation out there. HIGHLY recommended!

NEW for 1996: NetTerm now includes ALL SBI BBSs in a telnet-phone directory for easy telnetting! Netterm and the telnet-phone book are all available at the SBI home page.

**"QUICK" GUIDE TO SELECT BBS'S ON THE INTERNET
(SBI QUICK LIST)**

WW

**Copyright by Richard S. Mark (cerebus@dkeep.com)
Stephen Grande, SBI List Verifier
Featured in BBS Magazine, Boardwatch and West Coast Online
SBIQ0396.LST (rev date: 03/01/96)**

WHERE TO FIND THE SBI FILES:

WWW: <http://dkeep.com/sbi.htm> - Includes a Guided Tour of I'net
BBS's from around the world.

FTP: [gcomm.com](ftp:gcomm.com) (in /internet) - login: anonymous
[ftp.netropolis.be](ftp:netropolis.be) (Belgium) (in /pub/sbi) - login: anonymous

FINGER: sbi@dkeep.com (Information about the SBI List)
sbiq@dkeep.com ("Quick" Guide to Select BBS's on Internet)
sbi-info@dkeep.com (Revision Information for current list)
sbi-sysop@dkeep.com (How to Become a Part of the SBI list)

EMAIL: info@dkeep.com - put the word "SBI" in the

TITLE/SUBJECT (Info will be sent within 24 hours)

BBS: Dragon Keep - dkeep.com / (352) 375-3500 (login: sbi, pass: list)

Or call you Favorite BBS and download SBI0396.ZIP

In response to the WindoWatch request for a bio we got the following:

WW

The Genesis of the List

“A bio...hummmm.....

I dropped out of law school in 1982 at the beginning of the PC revolution to work in a local computer store. In 1984 I entered into partnership with a thoroughbred horse industry professional to offer horse sales data electronically to banks and insurance companies. This was my first experience with "online services". After the business failed, I started work with a local network and computer reseller setting up LAN's for law offices across North Florida. I eventually became the Network Support Manager for four regional offices, and became a certified Netware engineer (CNE). In the meantime I started up a 1-line BBS with my friend Paul "The Dragon" Martin called Dragon Keep in 1987.

The first system ran on an Atari 1040ST with a single floppy drive and a 300 baud modem. When we added a 150MB SCSI drive to the BBS, we became the largest Atari-based BBS in the world <g>. Back then, the online world was made up of computer enthusiasts and hackers - and most were heavily into fantasy-role-playing, which be-came the theme of the board.

In 1989 we made a huge leap of faith and jumped on the Galacticom band-wagon moving the BBS to a DOS-based platform running an incredible 14 phone lines. This was not only the first true multi-line interactive system in our area, but also the only system to require payment for most features. The hackers hated us, but the general public must have liked the idea because we were in "the black" the very first 30 days of operation. Meanwhile, I took a position at the local State Attorney's office as their "Information Resource Manager" for their 6-county offices across North Central Florida. In

the time that's passed since, my office network has grown to a 120 users, 6 county WAN, and my BBS has...well...exploded into a 64 node mega-system with over 5,000 paying members.

In 1994 we hooked our BBS up to the 'net, and became one of the first 15 "real" BBSs on the Internet. And that's when I started the list. Originally I tried to get my BBS listed on some of the "other" lists floating around, but discovered that in 1994, no one seemed to want to list a "commercial" system. It didn't matter that we were a not-for-profit BBS that merely took in enough money to operate. If we weren't burning tax-payer dollars, then we were not a legitimate system.

So I started my "select" list of BBSs...."select" because it only listed privately owned and operated systems. The first list was publicly distributed in November of 1994, and had 35 BBSs on it. By December I put the list up on the WEB. Since then the list has grown at the rate of approximately 30-40 new systems each month. Now with about 500 systems on the list, my "select" list is actually a comprehensive guide of true content providers on the Internet.

Let me conclude this bit of rambling with the true moral of the story. The rumor that BBSs are on death's bed is greatly exaggerated, and the reality is quite the opposite. Many BBSs have become full blown internet service providers - and Boardwatch magazine has renamed their annual gathering of BBS operators from "BBSCON" to "ISPCON". There will be very few sysops at this year's gathering. BBSs that forget about content will fail, there can be no question about this. BBSs dedicated to doing what they have always done - provide interactive online communities at a low cost - will succeed like never before. New advances in BBS technology, such as Galacticom's

Worldgroup and Wildcat's Annihilator, will continue to keep BBSs at the forefront of the online industry.

BBS sysops know a secret shared by very few in the online world. Fancy 3-D Web pages, and other trendy gee-whiz technology is not a replacement for plain old human interaction. A user might glance at a WEB site, and maybe even drop by occasionally to see if it's changed since last month, but that user will drop by their favorite BBS hangout several times a day to say hi to friends, make their chess move for the day, and see if that new shareware game is online. Just like the real world, you cannot interact effectively on a global scale - we don't "live" on earth, we "live" in our town or city. BBSs are, in fact, the towns, villages, and cities of the Internet - small enough to cultivate the only real "content" that's meaningful. The secret is people, not pictures. It's not the number of nodes, the amount of drive space, or the cleverness of the games - it's the members that make a BBS a special place users like to call home.

The moral of this story is that as BBSs migrate to the Internet, it's not that they have joined the so-called *global village*, it's that the world now has the opportunity to join these real villages.- richard mark - 3/96

[GO TO LIST](#)

Decency and Telecommunications Revisited!

The *CDA Challenge: Day #2
By Declan McCullagh
declan@well.com
Redistribute freely

PHILADELPHIA -3/24/96- At 2:21 pm today, one of the judges hearing our challenge to the **Communications Decency Act* finally got it.

"The folks in Luxembourg don't give a damn what our laws are. So my son, who's 10, can still view 'Sexy European Girls?'" asked U.S. District Court Judge Stewart Dalzell.

"That's correct," replied Scott Bradner of Harvard University, who took the stand today to describe net.technology. Bradner told me afterwards he thought Friday's hearing went well -- he had come to Philadelphia to testify because this "is such an important issue."

Judge Dalzell's remark hints that he, at least, is starting to understand the Internet -- and the consequences of the court's eventual ruling. This comes not a picosecond too soon for those of us who have been fidgeting in our seats, wincing as Department of Justice attorneys misuse technical terms and hoping the judges can sort through the cyberconfusion in just six days of hearings.

Dalzell has a keen sense of humor and seems sympathetic to our

arguments. In fact, I'd guess he's been doing some out-of-court web-surfing himself. In an astounding question at the end of the day, he asked Bradner: "Isn't it true that the exponential and incredible growth of the Internet came about because the government kept their hands off of it?"

Bradner gladly agreed. (What else would he say?)

The other two judges aren't quite as reflective. In an incomprehensible decision last month, Judge Ronald Buckwalter granted us only a partial restraining order preventing the Feds from enforcing the CDA.

Now he's justifying his original mistake by taking a critical stance during this hearing -- that is, when he's not dozing. During one of his more alert moments, Buckwalter asked if labeling all online content is possible: "Your problems are technical and financial? If these problems are solved and we agree on the definition of indecent, is it possible?" "Yes, it is," our witness replied. Buckwalter also asked earlier: "What do you mean by saying the Internet is a very democratic medium? Isn't there someone who steers discussion?" As proof, he held up a copy of a recent Atlantic magazine article that claimed the most popular USENET newsgroups are moderated and are therefore "quasi-authoritarian."

I suggested to our attorney, Chris Hansen from the ACLU, that he clarify what percentage of newsgroups were moderated. On redirect, Hansen posed that question to Donna Hoffman of Vanderbilt University. She replied that most newsgroups are unmoderated. Later, Bradner of Harvard University added that moderated newsgroups amount to less than 10 percent of the total.

Dolores Sloviter is the third judge on the panel. As the chief judge of the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals, she penned a sparkling decision upholding free expression in a phone sex case. In this hearing, Sloviter's questions are the most pointed and incisive. When Robert Cronenberger of Pittsburgh's Carnegie Library was testifying, Sloviter asked him if under the CDA "would something have to be removed from your collection?" Cronenberger replied: "We don't know. We would be afraid that someone might find something indecent or patently offensive."

The Department of Justice attorneys are an interesting lot. Jay Baron is a short, heavyset man who tries hard to land roundhouse punches during cross-examination but instead comes across as prone to malapropisms. I think he was the DoJer who confused <<http://www.eff.org/>> with <<http://www.itef.org/>> and "ISP" with "IP address." Before the hearing resumed for the afternoon, I introduced myself to him. He recognized me as a plaintiff and said he included one of my articles on Marty Rimm as evidence (!) and used it during depositions. <<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~declan/rimm/>>

Tony Coppelino is more reserved and didn't say much when we chatted, except to say that his office is busy enough with this case that they won't be sending anyone to the Computers, Freedom and Privacy conference next week.

I was impressed by the poise of Patricia Rosado, the DoJ's point person on porn. Yesterday she floated the MacKinnonesque theory that porn is harmful not just to minors, but also to women. Today she greeted our witnesses with a barbed, stinging cross-examination.

Unfortunately for Rosado, she was up against Cronenberger, a likable gent who came across as a traditional librarian close to the judges'

own ages -- not a net.geek like Donna Hoffman and Scott Bradner. (At one point, Judge Sloviter demanded that Bradner explain URLs and linking in English, not net-ese.)

The judges gladly related to Cronenberger's description of the Net as a library -- finally, something they could grasp! The ACLU's Chris Hansen expanded on this in a brilliant redirect, pointing out that the concept extends beyond that of a traditional library, allowing a user to link "from the fourth floor of Wiedner Library in Boston to the third floor of the Carnegie Mellon University library in Pittsburgh."

Rosado from the DoJ rallied with questions like:

DoJ: "You can do a keyword search on the seven dirty words?"

DoJ: "Would a search on Abraham Lincoln turn up articles about sex?"

R.C.: "I've read many articles about his sex life, or lack of sex life.

DoJ: "Would a search on travel turn up articles about sex?"

DoJ: "Would a search on geology turn up articles about sex?"

R.C. "Only if rock is put together with roll!" <laughter>

DoJ: "Would a search on food turn up articles about sex?"

DoJ: "You exercise discretion as to what you make available. You don't carry everything, do you?"

DoJ: "You select materials that reflect the local community standards?"

Not surprisingly, the DoJ is trying to keep the hearing focused on porn and sex. (At least it keeps Buckwalter awake!) Not the truly extreme stuff that obscenity laws already ban online, but the softcore Playboy-style cyberpix that would be permitted in the absence of the CDA. The Justice Department asked Vanderbilt's Hoffman:

DoJ: "You stated in your deposition that you were generally familiar with the web page called Bianca's Smut Shack?"

Judge Dalzell immediately looked up, startled: "Bianca's WHAT?"

DoJ: "Bianca's SMUT Shack."

Judge Dalzell: "Oh, okay."

Other DoJ questions included a passing reference to would-be cyber-porn researcher Marty Rimm, who claimed that pornographers were using the Net to recruit customers. (Last month, the DoJ attached Rimm's study as an exhibit in their response to our complaint and cited it as evidence of the pervasiveness of nasty stuff on USENET.)

Some examples:

DoJ: "You will concede, will you not, that this law will not have a profound adverse effect [on password-protected smutty sites]?"

DoJ: "Pornographers are using USENET newsgroups to advertise, are they not?"

DoJ: "Tell us about bots and spiders."

Judge Dalzell, trying hard: "That's an acronym, right?"

My fellow plaintiffs are wonderful. Kiyoshi Kuromiya testified the first day, followed by Patricia Nell Warren. Warren and I had dinner on Thursday with Jonathan Wallace of the Ethical Spectacle; we talked about the political and social forces behind the push for the CDA. I asked Wallace why he came down from New York City -- he told me because "this is the most important free speech case in 60 years."

Today I sat next to the DoJ's net.experts, who kept leaning forward to

whisper technical data into the ears of the Justice Department's attorneys. One of the two experts was from Brigham Young University. The other was Steve Nesbitt from the Department of Defense. One or both likely will be testifying as expert witnesses for the DoJ, but Justice isn't releasing the list until April 3.

Stay tuned for more reports.

What AT&T Should Have Known But Forgot!

The Saga of WorldNet!
Copyright 1996 by Lois Laulicht

When AT&T was forced to break up its monopoly, it turns out they relinquished a biggie -control of local access! Just ask the baby bells.

When thinking about the newest AT&T offering and its potential national and international impact perhaps one should contemplate with nostalgia and giggle at simple beginnings: Could it be that indigenous Americans did get it right the first time? Without media hype early local services of low tech smoke signals worked unless of course it rained. Even so, when those guys built a fire they built a fire and then went on to something else, - like carrying on trade with partners thousands of miles away.

In truth, it's been the offensive hoo-hah-hah of the national and computer press making too much of the AT&T announcement of an Internet freebie for long distance customers by mid-March! That time has come and gone and not even software. It could be the greatest service in the world but we'll never know the truth. At least not now!

Promises! Promises! Promises! Such is typical marketing practice of Internet and software services c.1996.

A call to AT&T right after the announcement took me from speculation mode to open mouth-dropped jaw mode. Who'd a-thunk that such a smart company, with an earlier downsize of 40,000 minus a

reprieved 12,000 workers, would come up with such a shallow and costly sleight of hand.

Zinger One: They started WorldNet on March 15 with 200 local telephone numbers across the country. Last time I checked with Channel One, Brian Miller had provided his customers many more than that...and he and Tess once described their service as a Mom and Pop operation.

Zinger Two: The AT&T model was invented by CompuServe, embellished by Prodigy, expanded by AOL and now abandoned by H.R. Block, Sears Roebuck, GE and NewsCorp. The smart boys are bailing out while they still have something sell.

Zinger Three: I spent some time with one of the AT&T sales reps. The favored response to the barest of implied criticism was "Well, we're new!" You'd think they were selling Tupperware with only the meagerest knowledge of telephony.

Zinger Four: Anyone who uses the Internet to do real work is acutely aware that five hours a month is stoopid-silly. That \$19.95 fee for non-long distance AT&T customers is the base charge PLUS the long distance charges using the AT&T long distance service...of course. Why would any sane, free speechifying Internetter give up their local ISP at \$25 per month with unlimited access?

The Zinger of all Zingers! Why bother? To scare the teeny-tiny local Internet Service Providers into a state of immobilization to mebbe sell out to the first carpet bagger who sends a fax?

Case in point: John Stebbins of Bloomberg Business News began his column on March 26 with "A.T. & T. SUES SMALL INTERNET

PARTNER”. It seems that Dhiren Rana the founder of and partner with AT&T of the “tiny” Synet, Inc an Illinois ISP, is being sued by the old lady “for trademark infringement, breach of contract and unfair competition”. Is this as big a belly laugh to you as it is to me?

And then, says Clari.net News on March 27, “after announcing with great fanfare its intention to offer Internet service to the masses, AT&T now is saying its technical system still needs some work. The long-distance giant still needs local computer nodes to collect data traffic and is lacking Internet software for Mac and Windows 95 operating systems. The service now probably won't be available until mid-April or May.....”

We all know that this is just the beginning. Everyone makes mistakes but this goof is so sad I want to sob into my pair of empty soup cans connected by a thin fishing line. Tele-what?

Lois Laulicht is the publisher editor of [Windo Watch](#)

Try Before you Die
Copyright 1996 by Peter Neuendorffer



I bumped into Alice, the retail giant, and my friend, at Downtown Crossing - a Boston shopping district. At first I thought she was directing traffic, then I saw she was handing out pamphlets. I took one, and read it:

"Share-Wear Emporium: try before you buy clothes. C'mon in and cart off whatever you want without paying. If you end up wearing the clothes you got, drop by with some money.

Otherwise just destroy the sweater, pants, suit, undergarments, or whatever Share-Wear you have taken. You need not return them, and there is no charge. Our motto is "what you wear is what you get."

We trust you if you trust us!

Inside the Share-Wear Emporium, many customers were complaining about certain colors not being available, and certain sizes were poorly represented in the "Cart it off on Us" room. Alice was flying about explaining that if you bought it, you would then get what you want.

Outside a throng of protesters were chanting "Share-Wear's a Rip Off!" and "Try before you die." Alice was noticeably moved, and decided to arrest them for trespassing. and slander. She picked up several placards on the ground that read "Alice in Restraints."

After several suits and counter suits in court -all the way up to the Supreme Court, which refused to look at the case- it was found that Alice was in fact falsely advertising, and was remanded to provide all clothes free of charge.

"The buyer knows best," she told the press, while in tears; "but I never said my product was free. This will ruin me, and have a direct effect on the leveraged buyout of Company X. It just shows us there's no free lunch," then added contritely. "But what about the sale of your skyscraper?" asked the reporter from Woman's Wear Daily. "I have no further comment now or in the future," cried Alice.

Meanwhile, the little man who wasn't there smiled secretively, scribbled a quick note, and ascended via helicopter to a board room.

To be continued:

Peter Neuendorffer is a Windows programmer and a shareware author. He and Alice have had an usual relationship over the years which makes for wonderful reading. He and Alice can be found at peterne@users.channell.com

Window Aspect: A Scripting Language**A Tutorial: Part Eleven Ghost BBS v3.20****Copyright 1996 by *Gregg Hommel***

Before we go on to anything else, let's get this out of the way....

This column will be slightly different than others, simply because PCP/Win 3.0 has now been released. I do not want to spend this column talking about that programme, however, there are a couple of things that I would like to cover about upgrading in this column. Even before doing that, I want to finish our discussion of the PCBMail code used to log on to a generic PCBoard system, and then we will cover some notes on PCP/Win 3.0....

So where were we?? Oh, yes.. our generic log on code for PCBoard systems from PCBMail.....

Remember this code??

```
proc get_prompt  
  termgets $ROW 0 prompt_str $COL  
  if CheckPrompt("Command")  
    if CheckPrompt("Qmail")  
      send_cmd()  
    else  
      taska=1  
      if taskb  
        watchfor=0
```

```

        endif
    endif
    elseif CheckPrompt("Enter)=yes?") || CheckPrompt("More?") || /
CheckPrompt ("Enter = Yes?")
        transmit "N^M"
    elseif CheckPrompt("=no change?") && lang==0
        transmit "^M"
        lang++
    elseif CheckPrompt("Enter)=no?") || CheckPrompt("continue?") || /
CheckPrompt("=none?") || CheckPrompt("Enter = No?")
        if CheckPrompt("graphics") || CheckPrompt("Color?") &&
graph==0
            transmit "N Q NS^M"
            graph++
        else
            transmit "^M"
        endif
    elseif CheckPrompt("Password (Dots)")
        transmit pword
        transmit "^M"
    elseif CheckPrompt("name?")
        transmit userid
        transmit "^M"
    elseif CheckPrompt("new user?") || CheckPrompt("new caller?")
        transmit "r^M"
    endif
endproc

```

I promised to explain some of the more obtuse code here this month, so that's what I'll do...

This code...

```
if CheckPrompt("Command")  
  if CheckPrompt("Qmail")  
    send_cmd()  
  else  
    taska=1  
    if taskb  
      watchfor=0  
    endif  
  endif  
endif
```

On a PCBoard system, there are various times when the word *Command* will appear, mostly when you are at the main menus of the system. But, since PCBMail was designed to log on, and handle the mail, I wanted the code to go beyond just the PCBoard prompts, and into the mail door, which, (for PCBMail), was a Qmail door. However I had to distinguish between the main PCBoard command prompt, and those which appeared when we were within the mail door to elect appropriate action. That is part of what the code above does.. checks for the keyword *Qmail* along with the keyword *Command* (i.e. the *Qmail Command* prompt), which invokes a special procedure to handle instruction within the door.

However there was something else which had to be handled in that script when we finally got past the login to the PCBoard *Main Board Command* prompt. What was the script to do when it got to that

place? PCBMail was written to allow for some flexibility in this for the user, so it used a dialog box immediately upon a successful connection, to ask the user what he wanted to do this time. That

dialog is under a timer routine so that, if nothing happens in it within ten seconds, it defines certain defaults, and closes down.

But on many PCBoard systems, ten seconds is more time than it takes to login, especially using a script. Remember, while this options dialog is on screen in PCBMail (and PCB Freedom), the script is continuing to login to the BBS. So, when the script got to the main board *Command* prompt, it had to have some way to determine whether or not the options in the dialog box had been set, either through user interaction, or by default on timeout.

Therefore, I defined two variables, *taska* and *taskb*, in PCBMail to keep track of the actions of both *tasks* the script was running simultaneously.. the login to the BBS, and the selection of options via the dialog box. Both variables were initialized at 0, and when the task they applied to completed, they were set to 1.

The above code, then, determines that, since we are at the main board *Command* prompt, *taska* is complete, and gets set to 1. It then checks the value of *taskb* (the user option dialog) to see if it is completed (i.e. a value of 1), and if it is, it stops a *wait* loop, to let the script continue past this point.

There is similar code in the procedure which runs with the dialog box, except in reverse, and which handles items the same way, if *taska* (the login) completes before *taskb* (the dialog).

I assume that this makes the above code segment clear as mud now, and we'll go on to the next obtuse section...

```
elseif CheckPrompt("Enter)=no?") || CheckPrompt("continue?") || /  
CheckPrompt("=none?") || CheckPrompt("Enter = No?")
```

```

    if CheckPrompt('graphics') || CheckPrompt('Color?') &&
graph==0
    transmit "N Q NS^M"
    graph++
else
    transmit "^M"
endif

```

On PCBoard systems, several prompts can be triggered by a series of keywords, and receive the same response, which in the case above, is normally a simple enter. However, one prompt, although still a negative answer, can use a more complicated response to avoid a lot of nonsense when you are logging into a PCBoard system. That prompt is the graphics prompt, which, if answered with "N Q NS" results in a speedy, less complicated login.

That response represents N - no graphics, Q - quick login, NS - news skip. It eliminates the viewing of news and bulletinfiles, and speeds up the login process. This is a desirable thing when a script is in control. So, I wanted PCBMail to make that response to the *graphics* prompt, but I didn't want to have to add a whole set of elseif commands to do so. The graphics prompt only appears during login, and appears only once and can be distinguished by either the word *graphics* or *Color* in the prompt. Thus, the code above, when it catches a prompt which MAY be the graphics prompt, checks for those keywords, and then checks to see if we have already answered the prompt, i.e. is graph==0, which means we haven't answered the graphics prompt.

If this is true (i.e. graph==0), then we respond to it, and set graph==1. If we then run across another prompt which contains the keywords for graphics in it, PCBMail will treat it as a non-graphics prompt. This

would be true since we have already responded to that particular prompt.

That about covers the code for the generic PCBoard login, from PCBMail, unless, of course, any of you have any questions?

Since I don't see any hands raised <G>, we'll go on, albeit briefly only, to PCP/Win 3.0...

PCP/Win 3.0 is Datastorm's latest attempt at being all things, communication-wise, to all people. This version packs a wallop, both in features/enhancements, and hard disk real estate needed to hold them. The outside of the box for PCP/Win 3.0 says that it requires at least 35 meg of hard drive space if you do a full install. So be prepared.

Let me offer some tricks/tips regarding the installation of this newest version...

1) Before installing PCP/Win 3.0, **BACK UP ANY PCP/WIN 2.xx FILES WHICH CAN'T BE REPLACED EASILY!**. I mean things like your custom scripts (**WAS** files at a minimum), your PCP/Win 2.xx dialing directories (in the \PROWIN2 directory, file extension **.DIR**), any custom or modified tool bars you use (same directory with the extension ***.PWB**), keyboard layouts ***.KBD**), meta key files ***.KEY**)! If you have your download and upload directories under PCP/Win 2.xx **UNDER PCP/Win 2.xx** (i.e. in subdirectories under the \PROWIN2 directory), make backup copies of any files in those subdirectories also.

I am not saying that anything *will* happen to any of these files, but it is far better to be safe, than sorry...

2) When you install, like PCP/Win 2.xx, you will be offered a choice of *where* you want to install PCP/Win 3.0.

****DO NOT INSTALL V.3.0 IN YOUR V.2.xx DIRECTORY UNLESS YOU HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTION OF EVER RETURNING TO PCP/WIN 2.xx!!****

The best, and safest choice is, if memory serves, the third one on the list or installing PCP/Win 3.0 to a new directory, and updating/ converting your PCP/Win 2.xx files. This requires more hard drive space since it is being installed in a new directory, rather than replacing old files. It will, however, leave your PCP/Win 2.xx installation in a usable state, allowing you the choice of which version to run. And that choice may be critical to you, for a while, at least, because....

3) Once more, scripts written in previous versions of PCP/Win and Wasp are not compatible with the new versions in 3.0. All of your so carefully written scripts will have to be converted to Wasp 3.0. Actually, the install option mentioned above does that for you, but some clean up of the source code will still be required and then recompiled before they can be used. Even so, there is no guarantee that they will function as you want after you do a recompile due to changes in functionality, etc. in PCP/Win 3.0.

Just in case they don't work, you want your PCP/Win 2.xx installation in a still usable condition, so that you *can* run your scripts from there, until you can get them working under PCP/Win 3.0.

Additionally, the conversion process during the install will only convert **SOURCE FILES**, i.e. WAS files. If any of your scripts are in

compiled version only (i.e. a WAX extension, without the matching WAS file), those scripts will *not* be converted, and will *not* run under PCP/Win 3.0. You will need to run them under PCP/Win 2.xx until you can obtain the source code to convert, or an updated WAX file from the author. (This includes PCB Freedom 2.0, and GHOST BBS 3.20... both are PCP/Win 2.xx scripts, and will not run under PCP/Win 3.0. Additionally, they will *not* be converted to Wasp 3.0, since they are WAX files only.

4) ***DO A CUSTOM INSTALL!!*** - and be selective, when installing, and/or be prepared to re-install PCP/Win 3.0 later when you decide which components you want to keep, and which you want to get rid of.

As noted above, a full install of PCP/Win 3.0 will take up at least 35 megs. of hard drive real estate. In that space will be OCR software for faxes, a QWK packet reader based on Doug Crocker's shareware WaveRider, 16 bit TCP/IP stack and WINSOCK.DLL (from SuperTCP), FTP, Telnet, Email, and News Group clients, and a Web browser based on, and licensed from, Spyglass Mosaic (2.0). There will also be scripts for Host, MCI Mail, Compuserve, and samples of other scripts.

You may not want all of these things.. if you already have access to the Internet, you may prefer to continue using your current Web browser, or Email reader, or whatever. If you regularly use QWK mail, you may already have a reader for those packets which you would prefer to continue using. You may have no need for OCR for your incoming fax files.

The point is that, in spite of trying hard to be, PCP/Win 3.0 may not be all things to all people. And ***NOW*** is the best time to handle that fact. PCP/Win 3.0, like PCP/Win 2.xx before it, does not ship with an

"uninstall" that handles removing individual components from your install.. it gets rid of the whole thing *INCLUDING* your custom scripts, etc. If you have your up and download directories stored under \PROWIN3, it will get rid of anything in those directories also!

If you install the whole kit and caboodle, and then later, change your mind, and want to eliminate some of the features, perhaps to save hard drive space, or for whatever reason, the only way to do this, in truth, is to remove PCP/Win 3.0 entirely, and re-install without the "goodies" you don't want, and hope that, in the process, you don't lose anything you need when PCP/Win 3.0 uninstalls itself. It is possible (and fairly easy) to, later, add items that you leave out now. Just re-install, using CUSTOM, and select only those items you left out, but it is much more difficult to remove any you install now, and don't want later.

There's more about PCP/Win 3.0, of course, and we'll cover that, one way or another, later, but the above thoughts should get you safely past the install. Once past that, we can worry about the rest later, since you'll at the least, still have a working copy of PCP/Win 2.xx on

your system to run until we do cover more about PCP/Win 3.0.

*Gregg Hommel is a much respected Aspect script writer and programmer. He is well known on the various nets hosting any number of conferences. He is applying his considerable programming talents to the construct of his own homepage and ours. Gregg sits on our Editorial Board and is a regular **WindoWatch** contributor. Gregg can be reached at gregghom@ophelia.waterloo.net.*

The Iwill MotherBoard

A Hardware Note **Copyright 1996 by Bob Blow**

Editorial Note: I had been following this thread in the Ilink Hardware conference and asked Bob if I might reproduce the following. This is not to be construed as plugging this board for compensation of any sort by either Bob Blow or WindoWatch!

As you will recall, I wanted to upgrade my existing 486DX2/66 VLB system. I initially went with the NexGen VLB 90MHz motherboard as the least expensive move to a 586 class machine while retaining my existing investment in VLB cards.

The NexGen VLB board did not work out for me. It does not comply with standard VLB clock speeds and I never could get it to work with my Hercules VLB Terminator. Therefore, I returned the NexGen.

I then decided to bite the bullet and move to PCI and a genuine Intel Pentium. That would mean not only replacing the motherboard, but getting PCI replacements for both my VLB graphics card and VLB SCSI controller. A co-worker recommended the IWill motherboard for several reasons...

- o Supports all Pentium CPUs from 75MHz through 200MHz
- o Uses the Intel Triton PCI chipset
- o Two EIDE interfaces for up to four IDE devices
- o 2 16550 UART serial ports
- o Parallel port with EPP/ECP support
- o Bus mouse port
- o Award Plug & Play BIOS
- o Support for EDO RAM and Pipeline cache

- o Audible alarm for CPU overheat/cooling fan failure
- o Built-in Adaptec AIC-7880 SCSI-I and SCSI-II Wide/Ultra Wide

The last feature really caught my attention. This was the first mother board I had encountered that had both EIDE and SCSI built-in. That meant I could use my existing SCSI hard drive and CD-ROM drive without having to replace my old VLB controller card.

I bought the bare motherboard at a local computer show for \$419.00. That's high for a bare board, but this is truly a premium motherboard and consider it worth every penny. I then bought the 256k pipeline cache for \$49 and a P150 CPU for \$539 from another vendor. BTW, this was *the* weekend when the P150 chips first became available and prices have dropped since then.

The motherboard was a dream to configure. I only had to set one jumper... the setting for CPU clock speed. Even the CMOS BIOS setup defaults were right on. I only had to enable the built-in SCSI controller which then interrogated my devices and came back with the correct identification of the hard drive and CD-ROM.

This motherboard comes with every cable one could need, including the hard to find SCSI-II cable. The CPU alarm is neat... it connects to the system speaker (if you touch your finger on the fan to stop it rotating, the alarm immediately goes off). I replaced my graphics card with a PCI Hercules Terminator Pro and have been happy since.

Bob Blow can be found on the popular Ilink network. As you can see he is a very helpful person willing to take the time to answer questions.

The Cutting Edge!

The Latest Thing **Copyright 1996 by Peter Neuendorffer**

Somehow I always stay a generation behind the latest personal computing advances. I have been unable to install a single-speed CD-ROM to Windows 95. My printer will only print in high quality mode -much too slow for me! My forays surfing the World Wide Web are unenhanced by my 14.4 modem. Multimedia means I have a keyboard, a mouse, and a super VGA monitor.

It was just a year ago I was pounding my desk in rage over my pokey 80286. I found myself doing just that the other day with my new 80486. Evidently the swap file in Windows 95 is a very busy item.

Is it my imagination, or are programs taking longer to load?

My friends, thinking that my programming bent makes me an expert and ask me to solve various installation horror stories. After installing games off the Internet, one friend lost the use of his CD-Rom drive. Another man had gotten a new monochrome monitor for his 8088. He called me up to say that there was only strange words up on the screen. I blithely said "Oh, it's a driver." Turns out he had the brightness control turned down, so only highlighted words were visible.

Barely a couple years ago, I had constant problems with my phone line. It seemed to happen on rainy weekends and it rained a lot of weekends that year. When the repair people came to the house, as soon as they saw the computer, they would say "Oh, it's the computer!" Very quickly, since then, the NYNEX repair department became much more aware of problems relating to the computer. Going back to my bad line, I started calling the phone company President's office on a daily basis. Eventually a man who looked a lot like Robert DeNiro arrived, saying "I'm the one who fixes the problems no one else can."

The other day I spent \$30.00 on a software tech support line, and they didn't know the answer to my question. Such calls have all the hallmarks of the obsessive compulsive behavior of those of us who call sex lines.

I picture some day a gigantic help desk you can call for any software or hardware support question, or any Jeopardy type question. "Wild Bill Hickock's sidekick". Answer "Who was Andy DeVine?" But I suppose they would have to charge a lot for the service.

My experience with Plug and Play has been dismal. Also, has anyone else noticed that it very hard to configure Netscape for Windows 95 with your own provider? I still don't have it up! The ads on TV show pc's which must be rather fast, judging from the graphics. And they don't seem to churn and churn, like my hard drive does. In fact, correct me if I'm wrong, direct film/video filming of a CRT screen looks terrible, so the image is usually pasted on digitally to the view of the box.

When I got my first computer, I took a cab from the store, feeling like a million dollars. My second, third and forth computers arrived package express, and I had to sit with my legs propped up on

the box. Talk about adrenaline rush. The last one, I had a premonition that my 486 would arrive on a certain day (I had a check for C.O.D.) and tracked down the nearest FED Express van on the street, assuring him I was not robber. He radioed his partner and found the boxes. When they arrived, I sat down and propped up my legs on the main box. It doesn't get any better than that.

Everyone else does it so here are my Top Ten signs that you are a computer nut:

10. You have a closet full of obsolete equipment
9. You put scotch tape on disks to re-use commercial disks.
8. You lose your house keys in the house regularly.
7. At least one boy/girl friend (or wife/husband) has shouted:
"You don't love me, you only love your computer."
6. You often post angry messages then delete them, praying
that no one saw them.
5. You are able to obtain legal promotional software copies.
4. You regularly get hangup calls on the phone.
3. You regularly get chain letters or credit card offers in the mail.
2. You sometimes end your work day by having coffee at 8:00 AM
1. When you hunt bugs in your software, you think that you are
really inside the computer.

Peter Neuendorffer is a Windows programmer. Several of his programs are available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.channel1.com/user/petern> Peter is a regular WindoWatch contributor.

Attention !

It's That Time Again!
Copyright 1996 Derek Buchler

As many of you know, each leap year the Internet must be shut down for twenty-four hours in order to allow us to clean it. The cleaning process, which eliminates dead email and inactive ftp, www and gopher sites, allows for a better-working and faster Internet.

This year, the cleaning process will take place from 12:01 a.m. GMT on Feb. 29 until 12:01 a.m. GMT on March 1. During that twenty-four hour period, five powerful Internet-crawling robots situated around the world will search the Internet and delete any data that they find.

In order to protect your valuable data from deletion we ask that you do the following:

- 1. Disconnect all terminals and local area networks from their Internet connections.**
- 2. Shut down all Internet servers, or disconnect them from the Internet.**
- 3. Disconnect all disks and hardrives from any connections to the Internet.**
- 4. Refrain from connecting any computer to the Internet in any way.**

We understand the inconvenience that this may cause some Internet users, and we apologize. However, we are certain that any inconveniences will be more than made up for by the increased speed and efficiency of the Internet, once it has been cleared of electronic flotsam and jetsam.

We thank you for your cooperation.

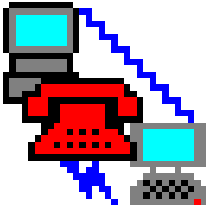
**Kim Dereksen
Interconnected Network Maintenance staff
Main branch, Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

Sysops and others: Since the last Internet cleaning, the number of Internet users has grown dramatically. Please assist us in alerting the public of the upcoming Internet cleaning by posting this message where your users will be able to read it. Please pass this message on to other sysops and Internet users as well. Thank you.

AAAAA - American Association Against Acronym Abuse

Derek Buchler has been providing [WindoWatch](#) with bits of humor from the very beinning of the magazine. He is a systems administrator and an Internet Watcher par excellence! He can be reached at derek@tecogen.com

Aitch Tee Tee Pee Colon Forward Slash Forward Slash !



Reflections of a ModemJunkie

Copyright 1996 by *Leonard Grossman*

H T T P: // The characters stare down from giant bill boards, stretch across full page adds in the New York Times, and appear with seeming significance in t.v. commercials. Radio announcers struggle with pronunciation: "Aitch tee tee pee colon forward slash forward slash . . ." Everyone who is anyone seems to have his or her own Web page. So, after a year and a half of surfing it was finally time for this ModemJunkie to try his hand at HTML too.

Actually, its all Mike Scher's fault. It was about a year ago. I was experimenting with my internet service. I had heard there was a way I could upload my old columns to a directory on the server at MCS and the public could use FTP (the File Transfer Protocol) to access and download them. So I played around and uploaded a few. I even announced their existence in a couple of internet newsgroups. No one ever asked me how to get them. I promptly forgot all about it.

Then a few weeks ago I was playing around with a new search tool, AltaVista. Modest though I am, I searched for my own name. There were lots of hits with *Leonard* or *Grossman*. But one surprised me. It

linked to a site maintained by Mike called *Chicago Internet Attractions*. I clicked on the URL (Universal resource locator), <http://www.tezcat/web/chi-internet.html>, and there was a description of my columns and a highlighted link. I clicked and there appeared a list of the filenames I had uploaded so long ago. I clicked on one and !POW! There on the screen before my eyes was an article I had written three years ago.

Mike had taken advantage of the fact that the FTP protocol can be used as a URL and linked like any other web address. By the way, lately I've heard *URL* pronounced *yourl*. I don't think its much of an improvement over U-R-L, said quickly. What we really need is a short hand for *http://* !

Now I could tell my friends to go to Mike's page and click. There was only one problem. Due to a limitation on the MCS server, I don't remember whether it's hardware or software, only 36 simultaneous anonymous FTP requests can be processed at any one time. With over 8,000 accounts, there are many times when it was impossible to reach the files through that route. I left Mike a note and he suggested I set up access using the HyperText Transfer Protocol. Now you know what "http" stands for. With a few suggestions from MCS users -- one even sent me a few lines of HTML (hypertext markup language) which could be used as a template for the index -- I was on my way.

I quickly realized I was actually creating my own web page and I got carried away. I decided to add an introductory paragraph. Then I decided to talk about symlink and CACHE and Nicol. Then I went to Harold Driscoll's page and pirated the language necessary to incorporate the blue ribbon from the Campaign for First Amendment Freedom. When I did that I didn't know it was being

offered to anyone. A few more steps and I was ready to upload the files to the server. I entered the URL in Netscape--NOTHING.

A few quick lessons in Unix permissions from helpful MCS regulars and WOW!! My primitive first page appeared, the collected "Reflections of ModemJunkie." Just a simple introduction and a list of file names but it was a start.

The blue ribbon didn't appear but a broken image icon did. (Readers: Is there a name for this??) I clicked on it and it took me to the page sponsored by the groups that have come together to oppose the anti-obscenity provisions of the new telecommunications bill. There, available for download, were several images I could incorporate in my page. A few more steps and the blue ribbon graced my page.

I soon realized that this was just an index, however. Not something worth reading in its own right. But now I was hooked. I began creating a real page- one with links to other places, search tools, news groups, even eventually, a counter that shows how many "hits" my page receives. I got indexed by the AltaVista. Search on ModemJunkie and you'll find about 40 references to my stories, with the first 25 words or so of each appearing on the screen. Click and you are reading my past.

Another addiction.. Now I walk around planning pages. But I am not very patient and creating a page takes patience. Everything must be correct or the page won't work. And of course what looks good on my browser, Netscape, may not look so hot in Mosaic.

And I am learning about the philosophy of HTML. Should I use a plain text editor or one especially configured for HTML... and if so should it be WYSIWYG or not (reminds me of the old arguments

between DOS and Windows). For the time being I am doing it all manually--so that I can learn what I am doing. I suspect I'll be using one of the more advanced editors before long, however.

There are even debates about form. White backgrounds vs undefined, preformatted text vs allowing the text to flow in the document. Even political correctness. It is considered bad form to say "click here" on your page. Arguments about this rage in the newsgroups. There are sites where you can have your page validated. Mine passed all but the most stringent tests but, in my opening paragraph I indicate that my columns, the "Reflections of a Modemjunkie are collected here." Both "Reflections of a ModemJunkie" and "here" are links to the index page. The validator solemnly informed me that this was bad form. Tough, I say! There are times when convention makes sense and times when it does not.

For the curious, my page is at <http://www.mcs.net/~grossman>
Click there!

Leonard Grossman is an attorney who works for the government. He is a WindoWatch regular and has been contributing "Reflections" for some time. Comments can be sent to grossman@mcs.com or leonard.grossman@syslink.mcs.com

The Newest Software!

The InTouch Sampler
Copyright 1996 by Lance Jones

Name: ActiveX Add-On For Internet Explorer

Version: 3.0 Alpha

File Date: 03/16/96

Size: 1.5 Mb

More Info: <http://www.microsoft.com/ie/appdev/controls/default.htm>

File Location: <http://www.microsoft.com/ie/download/ie/activex.exe>

Description: ActiveX Technologies makes it easy for the broadest range of software developers and Web designers to build dynamic content for the Internet and the PC. Through ActiveX Technologies, today's static Web pages come alive with a new generation of active content, including animation, 3-D virtual reality, video and other multimedia content. ActiveX Technologies embrace Internet standards and will be delivered on multiple platforms, giving users a rich, open framework for innovation while taking full advantage of their investments in applications, tools and source code. More than 100 companies immediately supported the initiative and announced their intent to develop content, applications and tools based on ActiveX. Netscape Communications has agreed to support ActiveX and will soon be offering an ActiveX plug-in for their Navigator Web browser.

Name: Change File Type 96

Version: 1.0

File Date: 03/13/96

Size: 63 Kb

Download Time: Approx. 1 minute with 14.4 modem

Developed By: Jack Mathews

Registration: Freeware

File Location: <http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~jm66626/filetype.zip>

Description: Change File Type 96 is a great Win95 shell extension which allows you to alter file types quickly. After you install the program, it adds "Change File Type" to the right-click menu of any kind of file (except Shortcuts), followed by a dialog box which provides you with several options for making the necessary changes. This application seamlessly incorporates a very useful tool into your Windows 95 desktop.

Name: iSeek

Version: 1.0

File Date: 03/15/96

Size: 973 Kb

Download Time: Approx. 16 minutes with 14.4 modem

Developed By: InfoSeek Corporation

Registration: Freeware (expires April 15/96)

File Location: <http://download.infoseek.com/download/issetup.exe>

Description: iSeek is an interesting application which brings the popular InfoSeek search engine and utilities directly to your Win95 desktop. An iSeek query bar resides on your desktop, allowing you to make search requests on InfoSeek without opening your browser or visiting InfoSeek's Web site. The program then returns search results in your default browser. You can enter your search as you would ask a question in normal conversation, and for more powerful search options, you can use the same syntax you use to search with Infoseek

Guide. Notable features of the program include the ability to store searches that you may want to use again as icons in the iSeek window, the ability to assign a graphical icon to represent the search (and then visit the locations by double-clicking the icon), and the ability to embed iSeek icons in word processing or spreadsheet documents for others to use. There is an Explorer-style toolbar with the standard Edit and View buttons, and buttons for inserting searches and locations and changing their properties.

Name: Look@Me

Version: 1.0

File Date: 03/12/96

Size: 1 Mb

Download Time: Approx. 16 minutes with 14.4 modem

Developed By: Farallon Computing, Inc.

Registration: Free Beta Evaluation

File Location:

<http://collaborate.farallon.com/www/look/look@.exe>

Description: Look@Me is a real-time Internet collaboration tool which allows you to edit documents, review presentations, examine graphics, or provide training/support on another PC. The program enables you to watch activity taking place on another Look@Me user's screen, and it can be run either as a standalone applet or as a Netscape Navigator plug-in. Collaboration over the Internet can occur between Look@Me users (or Timbuktu Pro users -- the commercial version of this program) on either a Windows PC or a Macintosh. The concept is quite simple but the applications of this technology are limitless.

Name: Moondo

Version: 1.0a

File Date: 02/27/96

Size: 2.5 Mb

Download Time: Approx. 40 minutes with 14.4 modem

Developed By: Intel Corporation

Registration: Freeware

File Location: <http://tucows.nia.net/files/moondo.exe>

Description: Moondo is a 32-bit application which pushes the boundaries of Internet technology. The program allows you to visit 3D multi-user virtual worlds and create your own virtual worlds for others to visit. Moondo features VRML rooms and avatars, audio chat, customizable avatars, multiple views of the virtual world (different "camera angles"), and URL-based browsing of distributed Moondo servers world-wide. Once your Moondo client is connected to a room, it enables you to view the virtual room and all its occupants, move around in the virtual environment, and chat (audio, text or both) with others in that same virtual space. Everyone's avatar position is updated as they move around. Unfortunately there were no occupants in the main Moondo room when I visited, but the features of the program were simply incredible. The application is RAM-hungry, so please remember to close any open windows if you're running 8 MB, or your hard disk will tire quickly of continual swapping.

Name: Safety Net

Version: 4.4

File Date: 03/11/96

Size: 153 Kb

Download Time: Approx. 2 minutes with 14.4 modem

Developed By: CT Software

Registration: Shareware \$15.00

File Location: <http://members.aol.com/ron2222/sftynt44.zip>

Description: Safety Net is a great utility for backing-up critical Windows system files. The program has a default setting, which will copy all "DAT" (registry) files, "INI" files and "INF" files from both your windows and windows\system directories (the copied files can be placed either in a separate directory or onto a floppy diskette). Safety Net will also copy your "config.sys" and "autoexec.bat" files for safekeeping. When used in conjunction with a virus scanner, this application can help prevent countless hours of grief in the unlikely event of a total system "meltdown"!

Lance Jones is the owner of the Intouch 32bit Windows95 newsletter. His effort continues to grow as he provides an authoritative resource for Windows95 users on the Internet and beyond. If you wish to subscribe to his free list send an Email to <listserv@peach.ease.lsoft.com> with SUBSCRIBE IN-TOUCH YOURFIRSTNAME YOURLASTNAME as the body of the E-mail

To unsubscribe, type "SIGNOFF IN-TOUCH" and send it to the above address.

Internet Gems:

McKinley's Magellan does a fine job of reviewing and rating Web sites. Their service certainly saves this surfer lots of time because their reviews are to the point and although brief - quite thorough! They gave WindoWatch three stars... we give them four!

Http://www.mckinley.com/

One of the handiest tools on the WEB is the **Internet Address Finder** by DoubleClick (<http://www.iaf.net/>). It's the greatest gizmo since the wire Slinky. If you're looking for an email address, checking the accuracy of an email address, or just finding old friends, spouses, or people you've lost touch with, -this is the place to look first. The supplied form makes it easy and intuitive to use.

BrowserWatch (<http://www.browserwatch.com/>) is the place to go if you want to keep up on what is new in the realm of plugins. The page not just describes each plugin but makes clear the appropriate platform and the development status of the software, if it is beta or a finished product or in progress.

Switchboard (<http://www.switchboard.com>) is a data base of both residential and business telephone numbers. So long as your search target is listed your prospect of success is excellent. Not good for new telephone numbers or women who have their phone listing under their spouse's name.

Where are we going?

The Last Word...

Copyright 1996 by Ben Schorr

The computer industry seems to have a benchmark for everything. There are Winmarks, Megahertz, access times, seek times, transfer rates...you name it and there seems to be a measurement for it. A measurement for everything except perhaps the most important factor: Productivity.

Let's face it folks, upgrades, enhancements, new software, new hardware all of this - in fact, - the whole darn computer - exist for one simple reason: To help the user do their job faster, easier and/or better. Does it really gauge a user's productivity that the latest version of Word has floating toolbars or that WordPerfect for Windows will let them view a graphic in the document in the editing mode? Maybe. Maybe not. The bigger problem, in my opinion, is that not enough IS (Information System) professionals are asking those kinds of questions before suggesting upgrades.

Far too often I see people roll their eyes or exclaim with indignation upon being told that a company isn't running Windows 95 or maybe not even Windows 3.1. Some OS/2 users brand as heretics anyone who dares to suggest that Warp isn't the best solution for every computer need...after my last encounter with one of them, I had to check with my doctor to verify that OS/2 doesn't cure cancer!

Of course I know that most applications and operating systems have their fans. Certainly there are applications that I like to work with

and enjoy recommending (I've been trying desperately to find a client who needs Lotus Notes!). But it always comes back to the too often forgotten piece of the system: *The User!*

I have a client, a law firm, that runs about three dozen 386SX-16s. These systems boot MS-DOS 6.22, are connected with a LANtastic 6.0 network where the last line of the AUTOEXEC.BAT loads Word-Perfect 5.1+ for DOS. In fact, most of these machines sit in Word-Perfect for DOS twenty-four hours a day. When I present this scenario to consultants and IS professionals one of the first things that happens is that the wheels in their heads start turning; you can see the flutter in their eyelids as they start contemplating and calculating:

"Hmmm...new motherboards, mice, Windows 95, Microsoft Office 95, 16M of RAM each, Diamond Stealth 64 Video, 4X CD-ROM drives, 1Gig EIDE hard drives..."

They start adding and calculating, mentally surveying the cyberscape to see what they can fix. The problem is, they haven't asked any questions. They don't know if anything is broken, and more importantly, they don't even know what the users *do* with their computers.

Next time you're contemplating an upgrade or change, ask this question first:

"Am I fixing a problem or just spending money?" If you're just spending money, then more power to you. Go buy that latest gee-wiz product. Get the keyboard with the scanner in it, even though your use is to play Wing Commander. Upgrade to Windows 95, even though you aren't sure what a mouse is. However, if you're fixing a problem, you have lots more questions to ask before you push the shopping cart through CompUSA.

1. What is this computer used for? The computer is a tool used to make the user more productive. Reread that last sentence, it's important. Go ahead, I'll wait...good! Productive means that it helps the user do a task faster, easier or better than before. Almost anything you can do with a computer you can do without a computer. It just might take a lot longer, more skills, more thought, more space, more help. The computer is supposed to expedite, simplify, and improve. Faster, easier, better.

2. What problem am I fixing? Is this upgrade a solution in search of a problem? If so, you're just spending money for the sake of it. I still haven't found a client who really needs Lotus Notes. It's a cool product, looks like lots of fun and profit to work with...but it's a solution in search of a problem for me, right now, at least. If you can clearly identify the problem you are trying to solve, you are ready to move on to question #3. If you can't...keep thinking about it and talking to your users.

3. Now you've clearly identified your problem or have you? Before we proceed to the next step we need to get as much information about the nature of the problem as possible. For example: Let's say that your user is experiencing "Out of Memory" errors in Windows. If you don't know what kind of memory they're out of, how can you fix the problem? If you add more physical memory to the system, and they were running out of conventional memory, you've spent time and money, but probably haven't done much to solve their problem.

4. So, - you know what the problem is and you've gathered as much information as you can about the problem. Can you now choose a solution? Chances are there will be at least one alternative approach to the problem, and anywhere from two to a dozen competing products. How do you, then, make a choice? The best way is to have

first-hand experience in solving these kinds of problems even though that's not always feasible. There's a first time for everything, as the story goes. Baring first-hand experience, my preference is to tap the experience of others.

Find a consultant or technician that you respect and ask them what they've done to fix the problem in the past. What solutions did they choose, what options did they consider and how it turned out for them.

Talk to end users who've experienced the problem and see what solutions were implemented and find out if they were happy with the results.

Don't rely too much on vendors or manufacturers except for easily verifiable information like standard specifications and features; remember that the marketing department puts together most of the sales sheets and their primary interest is to sell a lot of that solution.

If the solution is a new piece of software or hardware that the user will have to interact with (like a printer or scanner), keep the user involved in the process. Remember that it's the user who will have to use this tool on a daily basis. Long after you've gone back to the office, they'll be living with the system. It's crucial that the user feel good about the solution, it's implementation and the end result.

5. Now that you've chosen a solution, it's time to implement that solution. Carefully document the steps you take to implement it. If there's a problem, this documentation could prove valuable to you in retracing your steps. If you need to repeat the solution for a different user in the future, this documentation could prove to be a valuable reference resource.

6. After the solution is in place, track the results. Did you solve the original problem? Is the computer faster, easier or better than it was before? More reliable? You know what you spent in time and money, what did you get for it?

How does the user feel about the results? Check in with the user at predefined intervals, maybe the next day, the following week, the week after that, and then perhaps a month or two later to see how the solution held up over the long term.

The follow-up is important. You will, occasionally, implement a solution that does not have the desired results. The follow-up, and how you handle the feedback, can mean the difference between having an unhappy and unproductive user and making the adjustments necessary to turn that result around.

I realize that the temptation to run the fastest, latest and greatest leads many people down the road of constant upgrades, but unless you're made of money or like to be frustrated, it pays to have a practical approach to getting your users to their destination.

***Ben Schorr** is a working consultant and partner with a Los Angeles consulting firm. He is regular contributor to **WindoWatch** along with his hosting duties in the ILink Consultants conference.*

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*Illusions II (Adult's ONLY)	ilsoft.com	(206.215.192.2)
*Independence Online!	inde.com	(205.148.231.2)
The INDEX System (tm)	index.com	(206.14.194.1)
(I)ndustry BBS	industry-dm.com	(204.157.46.2)
INFIMA BBS	bbs.infima.cz	(194.108.205.150)
Infinite Data Source On-Line S	bbs.idsonline.com	(204.157.204.157)
Infinite Space Online	ispace.com	(204.149.254.10)
Infinity Online	ionline.com	(199.176.249.62)
InfoNet Bulletin Board System	infousa.com	(205.245.167.2)
Information Highway On-Ramp	on-ramp.com	(199.190.96.2)
Instant Access	instbbs.camba.com	(204.180.234.2)
INTERACT	diversion.com	(204.189.48.1)
Interact! BBS	bbs.ohana.com	(204.182.45.3)
Intercom Online	InterCom.com	(165.254.1.205)
INTERCOM Spain	intercom.es	(194.179.21.3)
Interludes Online	bbs.hwsys.com	(204.74.71.1)
International MBBS Sysops Asso	imbbsa.org	(204.74.67.100)
IntheNet OLS and Virtual Marke	inthenet.com	(205.228.202.10)
*The Invention Factory BBS	factory.com	(199.183.47.133)
IONX	ionx.com	(192.148.174.20)
IPlay On-Line	iplay.interplay.com	(199.182.210.2)
Iris BBS	iris.mother.com	(198.93.80.120)
Isle-Net	islenet.com	(206.205.84.2)
Jaguar BBS	jaguar.pue.udlap.mx	(140.148.4.100)
Janis II - Tokyo	asianet.net	(202.32.39.111)
*Jassysca BBS	jassysca.tu-chemnitz.de	(134.109.48.2)
The Jungle BBS	Jungle.net	(206.137.16.2)
Juris.com BBS	juris.com	(205.159.153.10)
KBBS Los Angeles	kbbs.kbbsnet.com	(204.96.25.7)
Kingston Online Services	bbs.kosone.com	(199.246.2.200)
Kitsap Information Network	kinn.com	(204.250.146.2)
The Knoxville News-Sentinel Kn	online.knoxnews.com	(204.71.5.10)
The Kobayashi Alternative BBS	tka.com	(204.117.63.1)
Kompleat Internet Services, LL	bbs.kis.net	(206.26.158.10)
The LabyrinthOnline	labyrin.com	(205.148.234.2)
The Laser Connection	laser.trilogy.net	(204.141.102.5)
LaserBase Communications	laserbase.com	(205.251.32.62)
LegacyNet	lgn.com	(199.190.102.2)
Legends Online	legendsonl.com	(204.186.4.1)
Liberty BBS	liberty.com	(199.89.140.111)
LIFESTYLE ONLINE	lifestyle.com	(166.82.150.22)
LINQ BBS	linq.com	(204.19.224.1)
Liquid Sky BBS	liquidsky.com	(165.212.242.2)
Livewire		(198.53.239.3)
Logic Circuit	Logicom.com	(199.190.88.2)
LOIS: the Link Online in Santa	lois.org	(199.74.141.105)
Love Bytes	bytenet.com	(204.96.26.2)
Lunatic's Asylum	lunatic.ak.net	(204.17.241.132)
*Macatawa Multi-line	bbs.macatawa.com	(204.177.185.2)
Magic Bus	magicbus.com	(204.193.157.249)
*MagicVillage	hh.magicvillage.de	(194.120.171.64)
Magnetic Fields		(204.252.234.44)

Magnus Online	online.magnus1.com	(204.97.15.6)
The Male Box BBS		(166.93.11.77)
The Male Forum	mforum.com	(166.82.150.41)
Maloca BBS Toronto	bbs.maloca.com	(198.53.160.20)
Maloka BBS Warsaw	bbs.maloka.waw.pl	(193.59.67.10)
Malum Information Network	malum.ab.ca	(206.116.148.8)
Marvin	tycho.com	(206.55.21.1)
Masterpiece	masterpiece.com	(204.30.116.11)
MATrIX de Puerto Rico	MATRIX-PR.COM	(204.183.157.6)
Meeting House BBS	tmh.bbsnet.com	(199.1.41.22)
MEME BBS	meme.bellingham.wa.us	(198.182.208.66)
Metro Online BBS	nycmetro.com	(206.14.119.2)
Metro Slave Online BBS	metroslave.com	(204.248.55.2)
Metropoli / StarPort BBS	unix.mpoli.fi	(193.210.15.65)
Metropolis serving the cities		(198.69.223.104)
Metropolis serving the cities		(198.69.223.102)
MHVnet	mhv.net	(199.0.0.10)
Micro Village BBS	mvbbs.siae.com.sg	(202.42.230.10)
*Midnite on the Net	midnite.net	(206.98.128.4)
Mike's BBS	bbs.gar.no	(192.150.211.10)
Miller's Party Board	mpb.com	(199.190.89.2)
MindVox	phantom.com	(198.67.3.10)
mixBBS	mixbbs.commdesign.com	(204.164.84.22)
Mnematics Videotex	vtx.mne.com	(198.178.154.1)
Modem Madness	madbbs.com	(199.190.126.2)
The Modem Nation	bbs.modemnation.com	(157.134.219.1)
Monolith BBS		(130.89.228.12)
Moonflower	moon.iea.com	(198.17.249.11)
The Motherboard	motherboard.com	(204.74.100.3)
MPI Online Services	bbs.mpi-net.com	(204.71.44.3)
Multi-Comm Las Vegas	mcomm.mclv.net	(204.95.95.253)
Multicom-4 BBS Network	multicom.org	(199.190.113.3)
Multiverse	telnet.multiverse.com	(199.218.112.3)
NAK	nak.com	(199.190.119.2)
NandoNet	camelot.nando.net	(152.52.2.82)
Nasty Playmates	np1.com	(204.94.47.1)
National Modem Pool (formerly	nmp.net	(199.89.140.116)
Needful Things BBS	needfulthings.com	(199.221.95.12)
NeoNexus Systems	bbs.neonexus.com	(205.148.244.20)
Net-link Online	net-link.com	(204.254.156.2)
Netropolis Entertainment Serve	bbs.netropolis.be	(194.137.61.14)
Networks Online Service	nworks.com	(205.246.114.130)
New Jersey Computer Connection	pluto.njcc.com	(165.254.117.52)
New Power BBS, Inc.	np.newpower.com	(204.96.24.2)
New York MatchMaker Pen-Pal Ne	newyork.email.net	(199.173.74.39)
NFE BBS (Naperville File Excha	nfebbs.nfe.com	(199.89.235.68)
Night Vision	nightvision.inetnebr.com	(199.184.119.228)
1990 MultiLine BBS		(203.5.127.2)
1990 MultiLine Games Machine		(203.5.127.230)
NiteLife - The No-Skanks Adult	nite.intermac.com 3004	(206.65.200.4)
Nitelog BBS		(165.227.94.25)
North*Star BBS	norcom.mb.ca	(205.200.3.2)
NTIS FedWorld	fedworld.gov	(192.239.92.3)
The Nucleus	nucleus.atom.com	(204.49.61.25)
Nucleus Information Service	nis.nucleus.com	(199.45.65.130)
Nucleus!	nucleus.atom.com	(204.49.61.5)
Nurse Net Nederland	bbs.nursing.nl	(193.78.222.138)
Odyssey Online	odyssey.ody.com	(204.94.37.100)
On-Line Entertainment	connect.on-line.co.uk	(193.130.168.1)
One Link	onelink.com	(206.148.229.2)
The One Stop BBS	the.one-stop.com	(205.133.113.131)
1USA.COM	lusa.com	(205.148.243.4)
Onix BBS	onix.com	(198.70.176.1)
Online Computer Distribution	MAIN.ONCOMDIS.ON.CA	(204.101.15.3)
Online Data Systems	ods.ods.net	(204.95.172.4)
Online Illusions	lusions.com	(205.218.80.37)
*OnLine Now	oln.com	(204.50.181.1)
Online Orlando	oo.com	(204.215.243.15)
The Online Pitstop (Top.Net)	bbs.top.net	(204.214.28.129)
ONLine WELcome	bbs.onwe.co.za	(196.7.192.2)
OS/2 Shareware BBS	bbs.os2bbs.com	(204.194.180.10)
The Outpost	pclogiconline.com	(198.70.191.73)

Pacific Connections	paccon.com	(199.74.141.67)
Pacifier Online Data Service (pod5.pacifier.com	(199.2.117.106)
Paradigm Online		(202.33.54.66)
Paradise BBS	pplnet.com	(205.240.194.3)
Paragon Online	pgos.com	(206.26.197.2)
Party Line Entertainment	bbs.party.com	(166.82.196.2)
Party Line Entertainment Netwo	partyline.net	(198.140.161.1)
PCS Online Services	bbs.pcsonline.com	(204.251.132.2)
PENN-COMM BBS	mailer.pennet.com	(199.234.141.3)
Pennsylvania Online!	paonline.com	(198.69.90.250)
Penultimate BBS	bbs.penultimate.com	(199.190.112.241)
Phantasy BBS	phantasy.com	(156.46.216.10)
Phoenix Online	phxbbs.com	(206.42.218.25)
Pics On-Line BBS	bbs.pics.com	(192.135.189.200)
Pink's Place BBS	pnx.com	(199.190.97.2)
Point Blank	pointblank.com	(204.117.211.3)
The Porch BBS	bbs.theporch.com	(199.150.244.1)
The Power Exchange	tpe.com	(199.190.65.10)
Powersystems BBS	pwsbbs.com	(205.148.196.2)
*PreRapture BBS	prime.org	(152.52.127.130)
The PressRoom	pressroom.com	(198.69.131.1)
Principle of Obscurity BBS	obscurity.pd.mcs.net	(204.137.229.20)
PrinterNet	printer-net.com	(199.227.41.3)
Prism BBS	prism.com	(199.190.77.3)
*The Property Line	wg.proline.com	(206.42.83.115)
Prostar Plus Information Netwo	prostar.com	(204.57.131.1)
Proton Palace	proton.com	(198.53.206.68)
Public Data Network	bbs.chatlink.com	(205.139.105.2)
Pure Energy BBS	pure-energy.com	(165.254.183.2)
Radio Wave	radiowave.com	(206.67.132.2)
RCI (Ripco Communications Inc)	foley.ripco.com	(198.4.164.3)
The Readiness Operation BBS	trobb.com	(204.188.70.3)
Realm of Legends	legends.net	(205.198.246.3)
The Rec Hall	rec.ocala.com	(204.117.196.8)
RIconneCT	ricconnect.com	(205.228.242.1)
Rippers BBS	rippers.com	(199.190.105.2)
River Styx BBS	Riverstyx.com	(206.66.34.244)
Rock Garden	garden.hvs.com	(165.247.49.130)
Rock Pile BBS	rockpile.com	(199.173.32.200)
Rose City Online	rosey.com	(204.119.59.210)
Rusty-N-Eddie's BBS	rne.com	(204.179.147.2)
S & H Computer Systems BBS	sandh.com	(204.181.142.11)
S-TEK Gay and Lesbian BBS in M	stek.com	(204.19.225.1)
Sacramento Exchange BBS	iccse.com	(204.87.174.10)
Santa Fe Online	sfol.com	(204.134.59.1)
*Secret Services Limited BBS	n/a	()
Silicon Matchmaker BBS	silicon.email.net	(204.152.80.17)
Sim-Net Online Services		(205.158.35.3)
SIO Support BBS		(199.248.240.2)
SM Board	telcen.com	(206.14.147.20)
Smurph Land BBS	smurph.com	(199.250.197.34)
Social Misfits - yabbs	yabbs.phred.org	(128.2.74.238)
Software Connection Online	sco.softconn.co.za	(196.26.228.4)
Software Creations	swcbbs.com	(204.68.200.2)
Someplace to Start	s2s.com	(205.219.130.3)
SonCrest BBS	soncrest.giant.net	(204.71.106.30)
The Sorcery Board BBS	warpl.weschke.com	(204.91.224.3)
*South Shore Secrets BBS	n/a	()
Southern California Onramp	Socalonramp.com	(205.148.252.2)
Southern Star BBS	sstar.com	(204.27.72.2)
The Spa!	the-spa.com	(204.97.227.2)
Space BBS	bbs.spacebbs.com	(192.216.53.4)
SPACECON/Braveheart BBS	spacecon.ids.net	(155.212.20.2)
Spider Island BBS	spiderisland.com	(199.35.3.99)
The Spring Guide	spring.com	(204.177.161.115)
Starship II BBS	bbs.usi-1.com	(206.98.178.1)
Starship Sirius	sirius.america.com	(199.170.102.6)
Strategic Online	bbs.sts.net	(156.46.30.2)
Studio PC Information Services	studio.citicom.com	(204.251.133.3)
*Sugar River Valley BBS		(206.20.130.3)
Sun.One	news.jou.ufl.edu	(128.227.230.225)
SuPaCom	supacom.brisnet.org.au	(203.4.149.193)

Superlink	bbs.superlink.net	(204.97.220.18)
SuperStation BBS	dias.diro.com	(204.94.164.130)
Surfboard!	surfbbs.com	(205.148.218.2)
SVIS	svis.org	(198.77.8.11)
Synergy Entertainment Network	sen.com	(199.190.79.2)
Synergy Online Communications		(204.117.97.2)
Sysop News BBS	sysop.com	(199.67.33.53)
*System Support BBS	ssbbs.org	(204.132.123.172)
The Nest BBS	netsbbs.pretech.com.au	(203.22.22.2)
TnT Online	TnTonline.com	(204.145.237.2)
Toledo's TBBS	toltbbs.com	(204.120.66.2)
Top Secret BBS	topsecret.com	(204.180.236.101)
Topgun BBS	topgun.cvinet.com	(204.97.71.2)
Total CHOAS! BBS	Build-Net.com	(205.199.50.2)
TPL	tpl.com	(199.3.240.65)
Trader's Connection (TCON)	trader.com	(204.120.67.2)
Tri-State Digital Imaging BBS	tsdi.com	(205.148.211.2)
TRIBnet		(199.2.128.3)
Trilogy On-Line Service (tm)	trilogy.net	(204.141.102.3)
TVOntario OnLine	fc.tv.org	(204.41.126.10)
The Ultimate Connection	freebbs.com	(198.70.174.2)
The UPS Depot	depot.netnet.net	(198.70.69.9)
Urbanite BBS	urbanite.com	(204.71.182.2)
Vail OnLine	vailonline.vailnet.org	(199.45.148.25)
The Virtual Gateway	vgateway.com	(199.227.60.2)
Vortex	vortex.greycat.com	(165.90.185.4)
Voyager Infotainment	voyager.com	(204.188.129.2)
The Warehouse	bbs.twh.com	(205.219.138.111)
The WELL	well.sf.ca.us	(198.93.4.10)
West Coast Online BBS	bbs.wco.com	(199.4.94.8)
The Wild Onion! BBS	onion.syn.net	(205.243.101.10)
WildCard Online	wce.com	(199.190.116.2)
WildChild Photo BBS	wildchild.com	(204.181.110.8)
*Window Shopper	n/a	()
*Windows OnLine	wol.com	(199.3.100.145)
The Wizard's Realm BBS	wizrealm.com	(204.134.71.2)
World Data Network BBS	wdn.com	(198.232.144.1)
WorldCHAT BBS	bbs.wchat.on.ca	(204.138.239.84)
WorldClub Online	wcb.com	(204.117.168.100)
*Worldport Online	bbs.wport.com	(204.122.18.162)
*WORLDVIEW BBS	worldview-bbs.com	(192.215.96.37)
*The Worm Hole		(206.42.219.18)
Wyld On-Line	wyld.com	(204.77.163.15)
Zeitgeist Bulletin Board	bbs.zgnews.com	(204.181.120.31)

TOTAL SYSTEMS LISTED: 474

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