Silicon Times Report

01/26/96 STR 1204   THE ORIGINAL INDEPENDENT ONLINE MAGAZINE!

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APPLE TO LAY OFF 8% OF WORKERS
DOES JAVA VIOLATE PRODIGY PATENTS?
ONLINE POPULATION UP 79% IN 1995

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RESULTS: 1/20/96: 4 of 6 numbers with 3 matches in 2 plays

From the Editor's Desk…

The editorial this week will be, thankfully, short. Mainly because the news in the computing community this week is mostly about Telecommunications and specifically the Internet, WEB and all things ISDN. The communications industry is going through some very interesting evolutionary changes. Ma Bell is finally being forced to "expose some of the secrets" and allow the world's telecommunications users to see another side of her. The ISDN for example is being touted by some as "NEW". God bless sale specialists. Truth is, ISDN has been around for well over ten years. Sad fact is... not many, Ma Bell's people included, knew what to do with ISDN. Now, because of the Internet and in particular, the Web.. ISDN is the "in thing". Why/ One word SPEED! How does 128bps sound to you? Without the use of fibre optics!   Many so-called facts about telcom are now being exposed as myths. Or, at least half truths.

We have postponed out Changing Platforms Easily series for at least two weeks. We are going to actually "live the experience with as you read about it. Stay Tuned it is going to be very interesting. Especially to those contemplating making the move themselves.

A number of years ago, I attended a Computer Show in Pittsburgh Pa. I was there to do a seminar about this

magazine and the platform we were covering.. "way back then". I make mention of this because the people there bent over backwards to make the "majority of us" very welcome. Thus the mention and our rooting for the Steelers this Sunday. To all the folks in Pittsburgh we wish you a great victory over Dallas. Besides Jones and Co. is in need a good dose of humility.

Ralph....

Of Special Note:

STReport is now ready to offer much more in the way of serving the Networks, Online Services and Internet's vast, fast growing site list and userbase. We now have our very own WEB/NewsGroup/FTP Site and although its in its early stages of construction, do stop by and have a look see. Since We've received numerous requests to receive STReport from a wide variety of Internet addressees, we were compelled to put together an Internet distribution/mailing list for those who wished to receive STReport on a regular basis, the file is ZIPPED, then UUENCODED. Unfortunately, we've also received a number of opinions that the UUENCODING was a real pain to deal with. So, as of October 01,1995, you'll be able to download STReport directly from our very own SERVER & WEB Site. While there, be sure to join our STR list. In any case, our current Internet mailing list will continue to be used for at least the next eight weeks. Each of our readers will have by then, received their information packet about how they may upgrade their personal STR News Services.

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STREPORT HEADLINE NEWS

Weekly Happenings in the Computer World

Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

APPLE TO LAY OFF 8% OF WORKERS

Apple Computer Inc. says it will lay off 1,300 workers -- about 8 percent of its labor force -- over the next 12 months as part of a plan to return to profitability. The cuts are to occur mainly in sales, marketing, and administration. The computer maker disclosed the plan late yesterday, after the stock market closed, as part of a report that shows a loss of $69 million in its first quarter ended Dec. 29. Apple added it will cut additional jobs this year, but did not specify a number. Reporting from San Francisco, Therese Poletti of the Reuter News Service says some analysts were disappointed with Apple's initial restructuring, because, she says, "the plan lacked specifics on how it will return to profits without losing more PC market share."

Apple also "surprised analysts," Poletti comments, "with a forecast for a second quarter operating loss and a fuzzy plan for its future." She adds, "The company said it plans to 'simplify' its product portfolio, but it gave no specifics." Analysts say Apple plans to jettison certain of its lower margin Macintosh products, but that Apple executives said they were not exiting the low-end business, such as the home market, and that it would be premature to give any details of its plans.

Analysts were cross this morning;

- David Wu of Chicago Corp.: "They were wishy-washy about everything."

- Roxane Googin of Gruntal & Co.: "It sounds very much like they are leaving some of the low-end and relying on low-cost overseas manufacturers. Their strategy is to license more aggressively than they have been in the past, which was about seven years too late" (referring to Apple's tardy decision to license the Macintosh operating system).

- President Tim Bajarin of Creative Strategies: "I believe they are getting out of the entry level markets with profit margins less than 20 (percent of revenues). It's a risk. … It's a step in the right direction. Now they have to execute."

However, Reuters observes, analysts say that Apple's "vaguely defined strategy," which seems to be to focus on higher margin products, "will deplete Apple of the higher volume sales which helped it become one of the top vendors in the PC market." Says Googin, "At the end of the day in technology, market share is everything. It sounds like a strategy of a retreat into niche markets."   Meanwhile, analyst Walter Winnitzki of Dillon Read told the wire service he thinks the reason Apple is not yet announcing what lower margin businesses it plans to exit is because the company wants to wait until it has licensees to take their place.

Says Winnitzki, "Their strategy is somewhat confusing. It's fair to say that given the magnitude of the problems, I don't think they have all the answers. The full benefit will not be realized for three to four quarters. There is no quick fix here." And apparently Apple CEO Michael Spindler, predicted by many analysts to be on his way out, may have been given some time by his board to lead this new restructuring.

APPLE SUITORS APPARENTLY RARE

While there has been much talk over the past two years about a possible buyout of Apple Computer Inc., it now appears suitors aren't numerous. Writing in The Wall Street Journal this morning, reporter Jim Carlton says sources tell

him that as recently as two weeks ago Apple was in discussions for a buyout by Sun Microsystems Inc., but "the talks broke off in an apparent dispute over price." "Moreover," Carlton adds, "people familiar with the situation said Apple also recently solicited a bid from Hewlett-Packard Co., among others." And, the newspaper says, in October, Apple CEO Michael Spindler expressed interest in rekindling talks with IBM (which in 1994 had offered to buy Apple) "but was rebuffed," adding, "None of the overtures sparked any interest, people familiar with them said." Of course, Apple isn't commenting.

"In recent months," Carlton writes, "it has repeatedly said that it intended to remain independent, and played down all talk of possible acquisitions. Apple itself appears to have concluded that its situation is increasingly dire and that it will have difficulty surviving on its own." As reported, Apple has announced an initial wave of layoffs -- 8 percent of the work force -- amid losses of $69 million, or 56 cents a share, in the fiscal first quarter ended Dec. 29.

Also, Apple disclosed yesterday that its inventory of unsold, finished product rose to $990 million in the period from $640 million in the prior quarter, the Journal says. "Most of those problems stemmed from Apple grossly overestimating demand during the crucial Christmas selling season," the paper comments. "The company also was squeezed by fierce price discounting by rivals." Carlton cites industry executives close to the company in saying Apple has discussed an acquisition with as many as 10 companies over the past two years, including Motorola Inc., Toshiba Corp., and Sony Corp. IBM offered about $40 a share for Apple in 1994, but the bid was withdrawn after Spindler insisted on more money.

SUN RESUMES APPLE BUYOUT TALKS

Talks aimed at buying Apple Computer Inc. have been resumed by Sun Microsystems Inc. and those familiar with the negotiations say a deal is "imminent." In fact, a Sun acquisition of Apple could be announced within days, they say. Writing in The Wall Street Journal this morning, reporter Jim Carlton says he has learned Sun CEO Scott McNealy has been meeting "around the clock" with his own staff the past few days putting finishing touches on an offer for Apple. McNealy reportedly even called an emergency meeting of his executives last Sunday.

"Although the situation remains fluid and any deal could yet fall apart," Carlton says, "one individual familiar with the situation said 'there will be an offer on the table (from Sun) soon'" and people close to Apple say the Cupertino, Calif., computer maker is set to accept it. Specifics about the structure of the deal or how much Sun will offer are not known, but one person told the Journal it could amount to a stock swap valued at about $4 billion, or roughly $33 an Apple share (which would represent a slight premium over Apple's price yesterday of $30.50, up 62.5 cents, in Nasdaq Stock Market trading).

As noted earlier, Sun reportedly started discussing such a takeover of Apple last September, but talks broke off two weeks ago, allegedly because of a dispute over price. "However," says Carlton, "people familiar with the talks now say the negotiations were merely suspended while Sun waited for Apple's stock to go down in anticipation of Apple's announcement last week that it lost $69 million, or 56 cents a share, during the fiscal first quarter ended Dec. 29."

Since divulging details on its loss last Wednesday, Apple's stock has fallen 10 percent. The Journal's sources say Apple had previously wanted to hold out for a better price from Sun, but now wants to close a deal as soon as possible in case its shares fall further. Carlton comments, "Sun is believed to be primarily interested in Apple's Macintosh operating system and related software, and might sell off Apple's less-profitable hardware operations, analysts have said. For Apple, Sun would provide deep pockets, more focused management and access to the corporate office markets that Apple hasn't been able to crack."

APPLE SAYS IT'S NOT FOR SALE

In the face of wide-spread rumors that a buyout by Sun Microsystems Inc. is imminent, Apple Computer Inc. executives said yesterday the firm is not for sale and that CEO Michael Spindler has the full confidence of his board of directors. As reported, The Wall Street Journal reports extensive speculation that Apple has agreed to a $4 billion buyout by Sun and there are reports Spindler will step down.

However, following what United Press International characterizes as "a rancorous meeting" of Apple shareholders at the company headquarters in Cupertino, California, long-time Apple Chairman A.C. "Mike" Markkula

Jr. said the company was not for sale and continued to strongly support Spindler. (Markkula fired Apple's two previous CEOs, Steven Jobs and John Sculley.)

Spindler told the wire service he is well aware of the serious problems faced by Apple, the nation's second-largest personal computer producer after Compaq Computer, adding, "I take responsibility. How can I not?" Sun had no comment on the buyout speculation. "Executives with Apple have said repeatedly in recent months it plans to remain independent," UPI comments. "But analysts believe leaders at Apple, which has been the subject of takeover talk for the last two years, may have concluded that the company is in such a dire situation that it can no longer survive on its own."

IDT ASSOCIATE TO BUY GE'S GENIE

GEnie, General Electric Co.'s struggling "also-ran" in the online consumer service industry, is being sold to privately held Yovelle Renaissance Corp., which says it will move the service onto the Internet's World Wide Web. Terms of the transaction weren't disclosed, but reporter Thomas E. Weber writes in The Wall Street Journal this morning that GE has been trying to sell GEnie since late last year.

Yovelle is a New York investment vehicle formed for the GEnie acquisition and is linked to IDT Corp., an Internet access provider based in Hackensack, New Jersey. The Journal notes IDT filed a registration statement this month for an initial public offering, with expected proceeds to the company of $41.9 million.

In a statement, Yovelle says it plans to enter "a consultancy and service agreement with a leading Internet service provider … enabling a large portion of GEnie's offerings to be accessible over the World Wide Web." IDT attorney Phyllis G. Korff says Yovelle isn't owned by IDT, "but it is true that the first person they'll be speaking to is IDT." Launched in 1985, GEnie currently has fewer than 100,000 members, the paper says.

ORACLE READIES NET PROTOTYPE

A design prototype of a low-cost computer dedicated to providing Internet access is being shown off by Oracle Corp., which says the first models should be available this fall. According to the Associated Press, Oracle Chairman Lawrence Ellison is set to show the prototype at a customer meeting in Tokyo this afternoon. The machine is shaped like a three-dimensional inverted "T," says AP, and button controls are mounted on top of the base portion of the device. As noted earlier, for several months now Oracle has promoted the concept of a device that costs less than a PC in hopes it will spur broader usage of data networks, for which it creates software.

Zach Nelson, Oracle's vice president of marketing, told the wire service a design could be based on a microprocessor by British-based Advanced Risk Machines that costs $20 and provides 8MB of main memory for about $200, an Ethernet connection for $20, credit card-sized accessory slot for $30, keyboard and mouse for $35, and molding and other construction costs of $50. "With marketing and retail mark-up, the device would likely sell for around $500," AP says. "The component costs are based on high-volume purchases." The wire service says Oracle relied on Frog Design, a Silicon Valley industrial design firm, to create the prototype that Ellison took to Japan.

ORACLE TO UNVEIL NET UNIT IN SEPT.

Look for the world-market launch of Oracle Corp.'s simplified personal computer dedicated to Internet use to come sometime around September. That's the word from Oracle CEO Larry Ellison who was in Japan yesterday to demonstrate a prototype of the unit. Reporting from Tokyo, the Reuter News Service says Oracle will set a retail price of $495 for its desktop "Oracle Network Computer," and a price of $595 for a portable model. Speaking at a business seminar held near Tokyo, Ellison also said he is predicting that demand for Internet PCs with simplified functions will outpace demand for conventional PCs by the end of the century.

As reported, Oracle relied on Frog Design, a Silicon Valley industrial design firm, to create the prototype that Ellison took to Japan. Reuters says Oracle will not manufacture Internet PCs but is seeking a licensing agreement with about 20 computer manufacturers worldwide, including several Japanese makers. Ellison did not identify possible licensees but was quoted as saying Oracle would release their names in March. Ellison said PCs now on sale have too many functions and Oracle has developed an operating system that will simplify operations to the basic computing required for the Internet.

MANZI JOINS INTERNET COMPANY

Industry.Net, a Pittsburgh-based company that runs a business-to-business online marketplace on the Internet, has named former Lotus Development Corp. chief Jim Manzi its president and CEO. Industry.Net also reports that Manzi has made a significant equity investment in the firm and is now a major shareholder in the privately held company. Donald H. Jones, the entrepreneur who founded Industry.Net in 1990, will become the firm's chairman. Manzi, who built Lotus into a billion-dollar company over his nine-year tenure as president, CEO and chairman, is credited with turning groupware and workgroup computing from technology buzzwords into critical business applications. Manzi left Lotus last year, shortly after IBM Corp. acquired the company.

"Many companies are trying to climb aboard the Internet phenomenon, but in Industry.Net, Don Jones has created the definitive example of how to actually build a market and make money from Internet commerce," says Manzi. "Industry.Net is a leader in business-to-business commerce on the Internet because it has made it fast and easy for buyers and sellers to conduct their day-to-day business electronically. It enables companies to promote their offerings to a huge audience of prospective customers and allows those customers to find the products and services they need instantly." Industry.Net says it will expand its Boston office to share headquarters duties with Pittsburgh.

MICRON CHIEF STEPS DOWN

For unspecified personal reasons, Steve Appleton has resigned as chairman/CEO/president of Boise, Idaho, chipmaker Micron Technology Inc. Tyler Lowrey, presently serving as vice chairman and chief technical officer, was named chairman/CEO. According to United Press International, Appleton, who also resigned from the board, will continue to serve in a consulting capacity for about nine months.

UPI notes Micron has become one of the world's most profitable companies in recent years because of soaring demand for memory chips. (Its margin of 28 percent is well above that of Intel Corp. or Microsoft Corp.) However, the wire service adds, prices for memory chips have been falling in recent weeks as major Far Eastern manufacturers add capacity.

JUDGE FINDS COPYRIGHT VIOLATION

A federal judge has ruled that copyright laws were violated by a man who posted on the Internet secret text he got from the Church of Scientology. The case, closely watched by online computerists because of its potential legal ramifications for cyberspace, centers on the church's suit against Arnaldo Lerma for placing the documents on the Net as part of his long-running criticism of church practices that he says are abusive.

Reporting from Alexandria, Virginia, Associated Press writer Anne Gearan says U.S. District Judge Leonie M. Brinkema put aside questions of whether the church harassed the critic or abused a search warrant she granted and, instead, arrowed the complex case to a few issues of copyright law. The judge said she will take up the question of damages and attorney's fees later, telling the church not to expect much money.

Lerma lawyer Thomas Kelley contended the case parallels a related lawsuit the church filed against The Washington Post, a suit Brinkema dismissed, saying the church had no grounds to block the newspaper from publishing excerpts from secret religious texts. However, Judge Brinkema said that, while the Post's use of a few selected quotes from the document was justifiable, Lerma's wholesale copying was not.

The church argued that trade secrecy and copyright laws prohibit unauthorized dissemination of secret church texts, adding the texts are confidential instructional materials for advanced members. (Scientology, founded 41 years ago by science-fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard, requires initiates to undergo teaching and counseling that can cost thousands of dollars, AP notes.)

Lerma has said he joined the church in 1963 and was forced out in 1978 after pursuing a romance with one of Hubbard's daughters. Last September, he began placing documents describing alleged wrongdoing by the group online. Says AP, "The documents Lerma distributed include hair-raising descriptions of abuse by former Scientology officials, claims that Scientology brainwashes and defrauds members and exacts reprisals against critics, and details of how people can achieve the theological growth that Scientologists say transforms people into near-gods."

IBM AGREES TO ENCRYPTION DEMANDS

Under reportedly intense government pressure, IBM has agreed to include a special key that will help investigators tap into data messages in return for permission to export a more-secure version of its Lotus Notes software. As reported earlier, the U.S. has prevented software publishers from exporting major encryption technology for fear that terrorists and other criminals could gain access to an unbreakable communications system.

Writing in The Wall Street Journal this morning, reporter Thomas E. Weber observes, "Industry observers said IBM's move marked the first time a supplier agreed to give the government special access to its software's security code." Other companies, though, also are negotiating with the government to find ways around export restrictions, he notes. For instance, Microsoft Corp. has been seeking industry support for a new scheme that separates encryption technology from application programs so that those products don't need export licenses.

While IBM is defending the move as a stopgap compromise until a broader agreement on data security can be reached, Notes creator Ray Ozzie indicated to the Journal he found the controversial plan somewhat distasteful. "We were desperate enough to try to negotiate a short-term, pragmatic solution, but we do not believe this is the right long-term solution," he says.

Mike Godwin, staff counsel for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, agrees, telling the paper, "The irreducible fact is that foreign customers are reluctant to rely on security products that have been compromised in some way" by federal intelligence agencies. All this calls to mind the federal government's proposal several years ago for the "Clipper" chip that was programmed to let investigators tap into phone calls and data messages transmitted digitally.

"While that plan died after privacy advocates accused the government of trying to spy on users," says the Journal, "the idea of leaving a back door open for government agents has remained alive. Under the Lotus plan, government investigators would still need to employ sophisticated code breaking to read messages sent via Notes software, which lets users at different computers collaborate."

The Journal notes security software encrypts information by using a unique key of software code, the length of which is measured in bits (the longer the better). "Until now," writes Weber, "to obtain an export license for Notes, Lotus has been restricted to an encryption system of 40 bits in its international version. Domestic users have been permitted to use a higher-level, more-secure 64-bit system. The new overseas version of Notes, tagged Release 4, will give foreign users 64-bit security. But to get permission to export the software, Lotus agreed to give the government access to 24 of those bits by using a special 24-bit key supplied by the National Security Agency."

DOES JAVA VIOLATE PRODIGY PATENTS?

Sun Microsystems Inc. may have to pay millions in licensing fees if its much-heralded Java Internet programming tool is found to infringe upon a Prodigy Services Co. patent, reports Interactive Daily. If Prodigy's claim holds, it may "mean that anyone who attempts to make, use or sell Java runs afoul of (Prodigy's) patent," Robert Kost, a former counsel at Prodigy and the current vice president of U.S. Interactive, told the trade publication. The news also could substantially boost Prodigy's asking price, two former Prodigy officials told Interactive Daily.

Rumors are ripe that IBM and Sears are considering selling the online service. "Prodigy is sitting on a golden egg," added Kost. "The real issue is who was the first inventor," Tom Smedinghoff, a partner at McBride, Baker & Coles and author of "The Software Publishers Association Legal Guide to Multimedia," told Interactive Daily. "If Prodigy invented the patent first, and if the Java program incorporates parts of the patent that are licensed to Prodigy, then Prodigy has a claim." Representatives for Prodigy and Sun Microsystems declined to comment. Interactive Daily is published by Phillips Business Information Inc. of Potomac, Maryland.

COMPANIES UNITE TO PROMOTE ISDN

AT&T Network Systems, 3Com Corp., Ascend Communications Inc. and U.S. Robotics Inc. have established the ISDN Forum, an industry-wide group that aims to make ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) technology more accessible to small businesses and consumers. The ISDN Forum will work to enhance interoperability between ISDN end-user equipment and the public network, as well as promote the market's use of ISDN for applications such as Internet access, telecommuting and videoconferencing.

The forum's first effort will be to make ISDN installations more transparent to users. The forum's organizers say they will exchange technical information regarding ISDN; address ISDN user needs; and promote interoperability that allows faster and easier digital transmission of voice, images and data across copper telephone lines. The forum's backers plan wide range of communications-oriented companies.

"Small businesses and consumers are hungry for ISDN as a quick, cost-effective way to gain faster access to the Internet, telecommuting and videoconferencing," says David Helfrich, vice president of Marketing-3Com Corp. "Improved use and deployment of ISDN can make that happen, and we see the ISDN Forum playing an important role in that development and promotion."

STUDY SEES ADS DRIVING THE INTERNET

Advertising, rather than subscriptions, will be the main source of revenue for companies offering entertainment and information on the Internet, according to a new report by Jupiter Communications. The report estimates that online ad revenue totaled nearly $55 million in 1995. Due to the explosive growth expected in the number of consumers online, that figure is projected to rise to $4.6 billion by the year 2000 -- still well below ad revenues for television and print, but surpassing that of radio.

The report finds that online advertising has emerged as a critical issue. Companies such as Time Warner and Conde Nast have been giving much of their content away free online and they're wondering whether advertisers will come through, as they have in other media, to subsidize the cost of producing top-quality content. The report notes that advertisers, while they've been cautious for a number of reasons, have been eyeing the Internet for its attractive demographics, cutting-edge image and potential for targeting and persuasion.

"Web sites are just starting to generate substantial ad revenue," says Adam Schoenfeld, vice president of Jupiter Communications. "But as the number of online consumers grows, audience measurement improves and marketers start to see the payoff in drawing customers to their Web sites, an increasingly higher percentage of ad budgets are going to be allocated to the Internet." Jupiter sees some chaos in the Web ad arena. Ad rates, for example, vary greatly. Jupiter finds the cost-per-thousand (CPM) ad exposures on leading Web sites and online services to range from around $10 to $450.

The current trend, according to Jupiter, is toward more accountability in Web ad rates. Some of the major Web sites and online services have begun guaranteeing a number of exposures, thereby giving advertisers a better sense of what they're buying. In this way, a cost-per-thousand model is evolving.

But while a CPM pricing model is an improvement, according to Jupiter's Schoenfeld, it's applying old thinking to the new medium. "Guaranteeing exposures brings some accountability," he says. "But simply counting eyeballs is going to prove to be a primitive way to measure marketing effectiveness online. On TV, radio, in print, the best you can do is buy a lot of eyeballs in the places your customers like to frequent, then sit back and hope for the best. Online you're going to bring customers in, show them around, establish a lifetime relationship. And you're going to make sales on the spot.

NET INTERESTS DRIVE MARKET

A computer magazine reports its latest reader survey suggests a driving force behind the sales of computers, peripherals, and software is an interest in accessing the Internet. CMP's NetGuide, which focuses on online activities, also says it has learned more than half of its subscribers -- 98 percent of whom are expert, advanced, or intermediate computer users -- say they will spend nearly $8,000 on computer equipment and software this year.

"The people who are using the net, the savviest users, are not only driving the online revolution, they're also emerging as the driving force behind the entire PC industry," says NetGuide publisher Beth Haggerty in a   statement from Manhasset, New York. The research, conducted by Simmons Research, found 54 percent of NetGuide's subscribers plan to buy a new computer in 1996, spending an average of $3,260 on a new PC, $3,513 on peripherals (such as CD-ROM drives, speakers, monitors, printers, modems, and storage devices) and another $1,109 on software.

The poll also found the magazine's average subscriber:

- Has been using computers for an average of 9.6 years at home and 9.7 years at work.
- Owns an average of 2.6 computers at home.
- Spends, each week, on average 17.8 hours online, including 9.4 hours at home and another 8.4 hours at work.
- Also, 10 percent of the readers have their own home pages on the Internet's World Wide Web and 50 percent work at companies that have a Web site running or in planning or development.

ONLINE POPULATION UP 79% IN 1995

The numbers are staggering:
- Nearly 5 million U.S. households opened new accounts on consumer online services last year.
- By the end of the year, an estimated 11,304,200 customers were online.
- That is a 79 percent increase over the 6,320,650 households that were wired at the end of 1994.
- And for the second consecutive quarter, the base of users grew by 15 percent.

Those are the findings by Information & Interactive Services Report in its poll of 22 consumer services. "To illustrate the rate of growth for the industry," says IISR in a statement from Washington, "the number of households who signed on with a service -- 4,983,550 -- exceeds the 4,585,000 households that were online at the end of 1993." In fact, says IISR Editor Rod Kuckro, "nearly 16,000 people a day joined an online service in the fourth quarter."

Noting the average daily sign-up rate has risen steadily during the past year, Kuckro added, "If current rates are only maintained, another 6 million households will be online by the end of 1996. But it is more likely that a combination of vigorous marketing of new and existing services, a drive by services to expand overseas, and a further drop in prices will contribute to the doubling of the current base of online customers." The three largest national/global online services (CompuServe, America Online, and Prodigy) reach 10.1 million users, or 89.3 percent of the total audience.

NEW MAGAZINE FOCUSES ON PUBLIC NETS

McGraw-Hill Co. is preparing to launch tele.com, a monthly magazine focusing on the public network market. A statement issued by McGraw-Hill notes that tele.com (pronounced tele DOT com) will provide news, information, lab testing, and detailed product comparisons of the key leading edge products that telephone companies, cable TV companies and Internet providers are investigating for the rapid deployment of their services.

"This market includes not only the traditional carriers such as AT&T, MCI, Sprint and other globally based carriers such as France Telecom and British Telecom, but also the cable TV companies, Internet service providers and wireless cellular companies, inter-exchange carriers, regional Bell operating companies and local business carriers," says Kevin Harold, tele.com's publisher. "tele.com aims to be the 'chronicler' of the new telecommunications industry. The publication fills an enormous void in the industry by focusing on the needs of a new breed of professionals within the new public network market.

tele.com, which will premiere with an April 1996 issue, will be the center of a range of new tele.com products, including conferences, custom publishing, newsletters and World Wide Web services. The magazine will launch with a worldwide circulation of 55,000.

COMPAQ REPORTS RECORD YEAR

Compaq Computer Corp. has announced record 1995 sales of $14.8 billion, an increase of 36 percent over the $10.9 billion it reported in 1994. The Houston-based computer maker's net income for 1995 was a record $1.0 billion, excluding a one time charge of $241 million associated with Compaq's acquisition of NetWorth Inc. and Thomas-Conrad Corp. Fourth quarter 1995 sales were a record $4.7 billion, an increase of 45 percent over the $3.25 billion reported in 1994. Net income for the fourth quarter increased to $323 million before, the one-time NetWorth/Thomas-Conrad charge of $241 million.

"1995 was an outstanding year for Compaq as we reinforced our number one position in the PC industry," says Eckhard Pfeiffer, Compaq's president and CEO. "Record sales of $14.8 billion propelled Compaq past Digital Equipment Corporation and Hitachi in computer sales to become the fifth largest computer company in the world." During the fourth quarter, Compaq increased sales in all of its worldwide geographies including increases of 54 percent in North

America, 38 percent in Europe, 32 percent in Asia-Pacific, 28 percent in Japan and 27 percent in Latin America.

SILICON GRAPHICS UNVEILS UNITS

A new set of computers based on speedy new chips made by its Mips Technologies unit are being unveiled today by Silicon Graphics Inc. Writing in The Wall Street Journal this morning, reporter Joan E. Rigdon says at the low end, Silicon Graphics plans to ship a $13,500 workstation called the IndyStudio with animation and three-dimensional special-effects software.

Rigdon says the system is "a direct response" to new competition from Microsoft Corp., which now says it will enter the special-effects-computing market by bundling its Softimage unit's 3-D software with the Microsoft Windows NT operating system and three different kinds of computer hardware, for about $15,000. Scoffing at Bill Gates' attempt to compete in the graphical-imaging niche, John Dougery Jr., marketing manager for the IndyStudio, told the paper, "Microsoft is bringing a knife to a gunfight."

The Journal says that in the mid-range, Silicon Graphics will announce more powerful workstations and server computers to better compete with machines that Sun Microsystems says it will ship this month. "The new line is important," says Rigdon, "because some Silicon Graphics customers had delayed buying last quarter in anticipation of the new line."

The paper says we should look for the company also to announce a new Onyx-brand supercomputer that it says can process visual data more than four times (in some instances, as much as 100 times) faster than Silicon Graphics's previous high-end supercomputer. The new chips are versions of the R10000, which Mips announced last Thursday.

POLL FAVORS PCS OVER POLITICIANS

A lot of people may fear and dislike computers, but a new survey suggests many like PCs at least better than politicians. The poll by Cincinnati-headquartered Northlich Stolley LaWarre advertising agency and Techtel, a San Francisco market research firm, suggests nearly four of every 10 Americans believe 100 PCs could run the nation better than 100 politicians. And more than 25 percent of the 1,000 people surveyed by telephone, and 800 polled by mail, said they would, at certain times, prefer to deal with a computer than with a person. United Press International says NSL and Techtel conducted the poll last summer to determine who, why, and how people are using the "information superhighway." The margin of error in the phone poll was 3.1 percent and 3.4 percent in the mail survey.

Some other results:
- 31 percent said they spent more time figuring out how to use their computer, than actually using it.
- 89 percent agreed students must become computer-literate in order to succeed.
- 43 percent would rather spend an hour on their PC than they would watching TV.
- 56 percent of respondents cannot imagine a world without computers.
- 17 percent sometimes believe their computers are out to get them.
- 41 percent believe computer manuals are confusing, and may as well be written in a foreign language.

NSL account manager David Brot told The Cincinnati Enquirer, "Ten years ago, people wouldn't have felt this way. They hated politicians, but they probably hated their computers even more."

 MICROGRAFX NEWSWIRE STR FOCUS

MICROGRAFX ANNOUNCES RECORD SECOND QUARTER RESULTS
Revenue Growth Leads to 126% Increase in Earnings

Richardson, Texas (January 23, 1996) – Micrografx(R), Inc. (NASDAQ: MGXI), a leading graphics software developer, today reported income of $2.0 million, or $.22 per share, for the quarter ended December 31, 1995, a 126% increase over the same quarter a year ago. Revenues for the quarter were $20.3 million, an increase of approximately 20% over last year. For the three months ended December 31, 1994, the company reported revenues of $17.2 million and net income of $0.9 million, or $0.10 per share.

For the six months ended December 31, 1995, the company reported revenues of $35.4 million and net income of $2.5 million, or $0.27 per share. This compares to revenues of $31.4 million and net income of $1.0 million or $0.11 per share, for the six months ended December 31, 1994.

"This has been a very strong quarter for the company," said J. Paul Grayson, Micrografx chairman and chief executive officer. "The combination of our new product offerings and the success of Windows 95 resulted in this record quarter."

In preparation for the December quarter, the company released an entire new product line led by the Micrografx ABC Graphics Suite(TM) designed for the Windows(R) 95 and Windows NT operating systems. Other recently released products include Hallmark Connections(TM) Card Studio(TM), Crayola(TM) Art Studio(TM) 2, and Windows Draw(TM) 4.0.

"We had very good success at retail during this past quarter as a result of our value-oriented product offerings," said J. Paul Grayson. "In the past year, the company has seen an increase of approximately 160% in U.S. market share in the Windows graphics market, as reflected in the most recent retail information received from PC Data, a market research firm. This success will become increasingly important as companies begin to migrate to 32-bit platforms during 1996."

Geographically for the quarter ended December 31, 1995, the Americas region contributed 49% of consolidated revenue, Europe contributed 37%, and the Pacific Rim represented 14% of total revenues.

"We are pleased with the growth in our U.S. business this quarter," added Gregory A. Peters, chief financial officer. "The combination of strong sales of our new ABC Graphics Suite and the success of our consumer products resulted in revenue growth of 47 percent over last year. We hope to translate this success into our international regions as we continue to release localised versions of our recently released products."

In December 1995, the company released the ABC Graphics Suite in the German language and simultaneously announced an OEM and expanded distribution arrangement with both Vobis Microcomputer AG(TM) and Escom AG(TM) . These companies represent approximately 25% of the German personal computer market and have more than 1,000 storefronts across Europe.

Micrografx develops and markets graphics software to meet the creative needs of everyone who uses a personal computer. Founded in 1982, Micrografx has become a leading software publisher by responding quickly to customer and worldwide market needs. The company's U.S. operations are based in Richardson, Texas with a development office located in San Francisco. International subsidiaries are located in Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia and Japan.

The Company notes that each of the above forward-looking statements are subject to change based on various important factors including, without limitation, competitive actions in the market place. Further information on potential factors which could affect the company's financial results are included in the company's 1995 Annual Report to Shareholders and its Form 10Q for its fiscal quarter ended September 30, 1995 filed with the SEC.

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N A V C I S   1 . 7 6   B E G I N N E R   L E V E L   P R I M E R

Updated Jan. 1996

This primer assumes that you have already downloaded and installed NavCIS TE from the DVORAK forum (library 1), or that you have already purchased and installed NavCIS PRO.   If you read through this primer before downloading and installing NavCIS, that's fine… but you may find that the text assumes that you are looking at the NavCIS software while reading through this short tutorial.

What is NavCIS TE?

NavCIS TE is our "Timed Edition" of NavCIS Pro. It has all the PRO features including a built-in spell checker, weather, stocks, graphical thread viewing, and much more. However, it is limited to 30 days… meaning it will work for 30 days from the first day you log into CompuServe using it. After 30 days, it will stop working (although it will NOT destroy any messages or other data you have collected). NavCIS TE has been designed to allow you to try NavCIS and make sure it is the right OLR (Off-Line Reader) for you.

Installing NavCIS:

NavCIS TE can be downloaded from LIB 1. If you have not already done so, and you haven't purchased NavCIS PRO, here's what you will need to do:

- To download NavCIS TE:

- Download the files WPROTE.TXT and WPROTE.EXE from LIB 1 of the DVORAK forum.

Installation Instructions:

The complete installation instructions are detailed in the TXT (text) file you just downloaded. Please read through the short text file and you'll have everything you need to successfully install NavCIS to your hard disk. To start the NavCIS TE installation, run the WPROTE.EXE file from Windows' File Manager or Program Manager, or if using Windows 95, run it from the START | RUN option or Explorer. Then follow the instructions in the installation.

Setting up NavCIS:

Start NavCIS by clicking on the NavCIS TE icon in the group which you installed it into… usually the NavCIS group.

When NavCIS starts the very first time, it will ask you to configure it for your modem and your CompuServe account information. Please fill out the Setup Session Settings (formerly Hardware Configuration) and User Settings (formerly Global Settings) dialog boxes. If you get stuck, just click on the prominent Help buttons in each dialog box.

Going online for the first time:

Once you've configured the Setup Session Settings and User Settings dialog boxes, you are ready to go on-line. To do so is easy: just click on the New button on the left side of the toolbar. NavCIS will go out and check your e-mail for waiting messages, "join" the DVORAK forum, and then disconnect.

Note: If you receive an error message, then you may not have configured NavCIS correctly for your modem. One of the most common problems is an incorrectly defined comm port… this will be reported as an "Invalid Port Name: <comm port>" error, where <comm port> is the actual comm port that you have NavCIS set up as. If this happens, click on

the modem icon
in the toolbar (it's the sixth button from the left). This will take you to the Setup Session Settings dialog box. Then change the comm port in the "Connector:" field to whichever comm port your modem is attached.

What's "Joining"?

This is a term that means NavCIS will join you as a member of a forum (even if you already belong to that forum), and it will retrieve the most current section and library lists for that forum. Also, NavCIS 1.76 will download the headers titles of message conversations) for the newest 100 messages in the forum, if there are that many.

OK, Now what?

OK, NavCIS checked your e-mail, joined you to the DVORAK forum, and downloaded the headers of the latest 100 messages… now what should you do?

If there are some envelopes sticking out of your Mail forum icon, it means you have waiting mail. To read it, just double-click on the Mail icon (if you single click on it, you'll turn the Mail icon off). After double-clicking on Mail, the Actions dialog box will appear. The top-most button, labeled "New:", will have a number to the right, such as "New: 4". This means you have 4 new messages to read… To view these new messages, just click on the "New:" button.

This concept of double-clicking on a forum icon is standard to NavCIS… Now, let's go configure your DVORAK forum icon…

Configuring the DVORAK forum:

1. Double-click on the DVORAK forum icon.
2. When the Actions dialog box appears, click on the Settings button. The DVORAK Settings dialog box will appear.
3. Now, click on the Sections button. This will bring up the Section Settings dialog box. A list of the sections will appear in the upper-left, while a list of the libraries will appear in the lower-left corner of this dialog box.

Before we actually configure the DVORAK forum, we need to understand what Sections and Libraries are.

What is a Section?

A section is where "conversations" take place on a forum. Each forum has anywhere from 1 to 24 sections. Typically, a forum will have somewhere between 5 and 20 sections.

OK, then what's a "conversation"?

Imagine I post a message to "ALL" in section number 0 of the DVORAK forum… and the subject is, "Message spell checking?" OK, someone on the forum reads the message (since its addressed to "ALL", everyone can read it) and replies to it… here's an example of the "thread" so far:

  Message spell checking?
    |
    --- Reply from Bob

Now, here comes someone else, let's say Tim. Tim reads Bob's reply and he decides to reply to Bob's message. Now the thread looks like this:

  Message spell checking?
    |
    --- Reply from Bob
        |
        --- Reply from Tim

And someone else, Sara, comes along and replies to the original message that was posted… now the conversational thread looks like this:

```
Message spell checking?
   |
   --- Reply from Bob
   |     |
   |     --- Reply from Tim
   |
   --- Reply from Sara
```

In essence, a conversation is nothing but an original message (often called a "parent" message) with lots of replies (often called a "child" or "children" messages). The neat thing is, replies can be to the original author of the message (like the one from Bob and Sara), or they can be to a replier (like Tim's reply to Bob).

NavCIS can retrieve these conversations, so you can read them from the parent onwards…

Then what's a Library?

A library is a part of the forum that holds files… each CompuServe forum has libraries (like sections, they vary in number), and each library holds files… sometimes just a few, sometimes hundreds.

OK, back to configuring the DVORAK forum:

Back in the Sections Settings dialog box, if a section looks interesting, you should make it "active" by placing a check mark in the LEFT-hand checkbox. Do NOT click on the right-hand checkbox… this is an advanced feature and should be ignored for now.

For instance, as a NavCIS beginner, you might find Section 0 "NavCIS Beginners" interesting, along with section 2 "NavCIS TE". So, you'd place a check mark to the left of sections 0 and 2. Please do so.

Now, let's configure the Libraries… place a check mark next to the libraries that interest you… since most libraries are partnered with a section, we'll simply check the left-hand check boxes for libs 0 and 2… wait! Lib 1 looks interesting too… so let's put a check mark to the left of that one also.

Intelligent header scanning:

A very useful feature that NavCIS offers is it's ability to look for keywords in the conversation thread titles (called headers). If it spots a keyword that you've entered, it will highlight that thread by placing a pair of eyeglasses to the left of the header title. For instance, if we define the word "spell" as a keyword, then all headers with the word "spell" would be highlighted with a pair of eyeglasses next to it.

Defining keywords:

The top-left field is called "Msg Header Keys:" and this is where you can define the keywords you'd like to watch for. You can enter up to 10 words, and each should be separated with a space… Here is an example:

    dvorak navcis modem OS/2 95 wincim

Next, select the check diamond labeled "Highlight Keyed Hdrs". This tells NavCIS to turn on the feature and actually check for the keywords defined in the Msg Header Keys field.

Rules: Each word MUST be separated by 1 space. Both upper-and lower-case characters may be entered. Searches are somewhat "fuzzy". This means that "95" would find headers with "Windows 95", as well as "1995" in them, but not a

header with "189579". The reason… "95" appears as either a separate "chunk" as in Windows "95", or as a discrete prepend or append as in 19"95".

Finished configuring the DVORAK forum… time to go on-line!

Now that you've done the basic configuration for the DVORAK forum, press "OK" until you are back at the main NavCIS screen. Make sure that both the Mail and DVORAK forum icons are active, that is, that they do not say "off". (If an icon says "off", that means it will be ignored during an on-line session -- just click on it once to turn it back "on".)

Next, press the NEW button on the left side of the toolbar. NavCIS will go on-line and check the DVORAK forum for messages and will scan for conversational thread titles (headers) in the sections that you marked with a check mark. If any new e-mail has come in, it will pick that up for you also, as well as post any replies you may have written to previous e-mail.

Once NavCIS is finished scanning the DVORAK forum, and has disconnected from CompuServe, you can review the information easily… just double-click on the DVORAK forum icon to call up the Actions dialog box.

Headers galore!

Underneath the "New:" button is the "Headers:" button. This button will display a number, such as "100"… this means there are 100 new headers (conversation titles) for you to look at. To see these titles, just click on the "Headers:" button once.

How to retrieve a thread conversation:

The headers (thread conversation titles) have this format:

   193709 [8] What is CD-ROM forum? 0/NavCIS Beginners

The number on the left is the CompuServe message number of the parent message. CompuServe assigns message numbers to all messages. The "[8]" is the number of replies currently in the thread… so, if you downloaded this thread, you would receive a total of 9 messages: the original parent plus 8 replies.

The next part is the title of the conversation, commonly referred to as a header title. It is the title of the original message posted by the first author who started the conversation.

Finally, the section number and name is given, in this case, section 0 and its name, "NavCIS Beginners".

To mark the header for retrieval, just click on it. You can click on as many headers as you desire. If you change your mind and decide you do not want to download a header that you've marked, just click on it again; it will be unmarked.

Downloading the marked headers:

Once you've marked the headers you want to retrieve, press OK and return to the main NavCIS screen. Then press the ACTION button on the toolbar (it's the second from the left) and NavCIS will go on-line and retrieve (download) the messages in the headers you've marked.

Reading the messages:

Once NavCIS disconnects from CompuServe, the messages that it retrieved can be accessed by double-clicking on the DVORAK forum's icon and then pressing the "New:" button.

Replying to a message:

OK, you're reading the messages that you just downloaded and now you want to post a reply to one of them. To do this, just click on the Reply button on the toolbar (it is the 5th button from the right) while you are reading the message.

Go ahead and type your reply into the text area. If you want to cite some of the text from the original message in your reply, please see "Quoting original text" below.

After you have finished writing your reply, click on the Send button. Your reply will be posted to the forum the next time you go online with either the NEW or ACTIONS buttons.

Quoting original text:

Using your mouse, click on the original message window to make it active. Highlight the text you want to quote by clicking and dragging… use the same method you would as in a Windows word processor such as Write or Word.

Next, click on the Reply button. The highlighted text will be copied into your reply window and will even have " > > " and " < < " brackets added to each end to indicate that it is a quote from the original message.

You can do this as many time as you want. You can also use the keystrokes, Alt+O, M to return to the original message when the Reply window is active. This will make the original message active.

How to set up a new forum:

Now that you know how to set up a forum that was already on your NavCIS desktop, let's see how to add a new forum to your desktop and then set it up.

Use the "New Forum" drag 'n drop icon on the right side of the main NavCIS desktop. Pick it up and drop it onto the gray workspace area of the main NavCIS desktop. The Add a Forum dialog box will appear.

Click on the Browse button in the upper-right corner of the dialog box. This will bring up a list of CompuServe forums. Search through the list and choose a forum that looks interesting to you. Click on one that you wish to add to your desktop and click on the OK button.

The name of that forum and its long description will automatically be inserted into the proper fields in the Add a Forum dialog box. Then, press the OK button.

The new forum now appears on the main NavCIS work area. You must now join the forum by going online with a NEW or ACTION session, and repeat the steps outlined in the "Configuring the DVORAK forum" section towards the beginning of this text file.

Composing a new message:

Composing a new message is similar to replying to a message in that you type in your message and then Send it. But first, we must bring up the Compose a New Message dialog window.   (For this example, we will once again use the DVORAK forum.) To do this, click on the Compose drag 'n drop icon (it is on the right-hand side of the main NavCIS desktop), drag it onto the DVORAK forum's icon, and drop it.

The first item you will need to enter is the person's CompuServe ID to whom you want to send this new message. If you are sending the new message to Technical Support (if you have a question, for example), you should address the message to "ALL". No matter who you are sending this message to, you will need to enter either their ID or "ALL" into the "To:" field.

Next, you will need to enter the subject of your message into the "Subj:" field. The subject is very critical! First, it is limited… CompuServe limits subjects to only 24 characters (this includes the spaces!). So, be sure to choose your words carefully. Next, it's important to create a subject that others will find intriguing… titles like "need help" or "Arrrgh!" are not very meaningful to most people, and likely will be ignored by other users (although Dvorak Tech Support

personnel will read them, since they read all messages posted to the forum). Subjects such as "How to keep modem quiet?" and "Help with downloading" are much more indicative… and far more likely to be read by other forum visitors.

Since you dragged the Compose icon onto the DVORAK forum's icon to open this Compose a New Message window, the forum's name will already appear in the "Forum:" field. In the "Sec:" field, you will probably need to change the message section to where you want the message to be posted. For this example, choose section 2 if you are using NavCIS TE, or section 4 if you are using NavCIS PRO.

Now comes the fun part… typing in your message! Do this in the big blank text area; click once inside the area and then type away!

When you have finished typing in your message, click on the Send button. Your message will be placed in the Outgoing Actions queue, and will be posted to CompuServe the next time you do a NEW or ACTION online session.

Note: Do NOT press <return/enter> at the end of each line when composing your message… NavCIS will automatically "wrap" the text on the line for you. The only time you should press the <return/enter> key is when you wish to start a new paragraph.

Learning more about NavCIS:

There is much more to learn about. For a good primer on catalogs, file uploading and downloading, and file types, please take a look at PRIMER2.TXT here in Library 1 of the DVORAK forum.

For information not covered in either of these primer text files, use NavCIS' context-sensitive, built-in help, and read conversation threads on the DVORAK forum. You will find many of your questions answered in either of these two places.

Further Help:

If you need help regarding NavCIS, and can't find it in NavCIS' extensive built-in help, please post a message to the DVORAK forum. It is considered customary to address your request for tech support to "ALL"… in other words, type the word "ALL" into the "To:" field in NavCIS. This way, it is a public message and can be read by anyone. Often, you'll find your question answered by another helpful NavCIS user who has recently experienced the same problem you are now having. But don't worry, even if your message is not answered by another user, it will be answered by Dvorak Development Tech Support personnel.

More about version 1.76:

NavCIS 1.76 now supports the Host Micro Interface (HMI) protocol on CompuServe. HMI is a much more robust and intelligent protocol than the older ASCII protocol (which previous versions of NavCIS used).

One of the advantages of the HMI protocol is that it will allow you to use the new NISA forums. NISA (New information Server Architecture) forums use 32-bit Windows NT-based host computers that will allow CompuServe to be able to handle larger amounts of traffic than is currently possible with their older host computers. Between HMI and NISA, CompuServe's reliability, speed, and overall level of successful connections should increase dramatically.
Also in version 1.76, keeping with previous releases, we have "snuck" in quite a few features and fixes to make sure that NavCIS remains your favorite off-line reader. Please see "What's New in 1.76" in NavCIS' built-in help for more information on what's new in NavCIS 1.76.

P R I M E R   2 :   F I L E S   &   C A T A L O G S

Updated Jan. 1996

This primer assumes that you have read the first primer, called PRIMER.TXT (available in LIB 1 of DVORAK).

OK, I've heard there are lots of files on CompuServe, free for the taking. Is this true?

Yes, it is. There are literally hundreds of thousands of files available for "downloading". Downloading is the term that means "fetching" a file from CompuServe and putting it on your hard disk.

What sort of files are available?

Graphics files:	In other words, pictures. GIF, JPG, BMP files. Icons.
Multimedia files:	AVI, MPEG, and QuickTime files.
Sounds files:	WAV and MID files.
Software:	Games, utilities, applications. You name it.
FAQ files:	Frequently Asked Questions.
Text files:	Files that describe, instruct, relate, report, etc.
Patch files:	Do you have Word 6.0 and want to update it to Word 6.0 sub-version c?
Driver files:	Have you bought a printer but don't have the correct drivers for it? Or maybe it's a CD-ROM, or a monitor, or a…. you get the idea.

and much, much more.

Great! I'm excited. How do I find out what files are available in my favorite forum?

NavCIS makes this very easy. First, pick up the Lib Search drag 'n drop icon from the right side of the main NavCIS screen. It's the 3rd one from the top with the colored floppies on it. (To pick it up and drag it, click on it with the left mouse button and keep holding the button down. When you release the button, the Lib Search cursor will "drop".)

Now drag the Lib Search cursor over to the forum you wish to search and drop it onto it. If you do not drop it on top of a forum icon, nothing will happen.

Making a file catalog for the DVORAK forum:

As an example, let's create a file list (called a "catalog") for the DVORAK forum.

Pick up the Lib Search drag 'n drop icon and drop it onto the DVORAK forum.

The Create Catalog dialog window will appear. (If it did not appear, then you probably did not "drop" the Lib Search icon onto the DVORAK forum's icon. Please try again.)

Notice the top field, "File Mask:", has "*.*" in it. This means it will create a catalog of all files (all files with any extension). If you only want a catalog of EXE (executable) files, you would type "*.EXE". For your first catalog, we recommend you leave the "File Mask:" field as "*.*" (called "star-dot-star" by tech support folks).

The next two fields, "Keywords:" and "Max Days Old:", can be skipped. These are advanced features that are covered in NavCIS' extensive built-in help.

Now it's time for you to make a decision…

Should you check the Long Description check box or not? If you do, here's what NavCIS will get for each file: (what we call a "long" catalog listing)

- The file name (up to 12 characters)
- The file title (up to 49 characters long)
- The file count (the number of times the file has been downloaded by other CompuServe users)
- The file size (in bytes)
- The file uploader's ID (the CompuServe ID of the person who uploaded the file to CompuServe)

- The file upload date (the date the file was uploaded)
- The file keywords   (the keyword list for the file)
- The long description (a detailed description of the file; it can be up to 549 characters long)

If you do not check the Long Description check box, here's what you'll get for each file: (what we call a "short" catalog listing)

- The file name   (up to 12 characters)
- The file title   (up to 49 characters)
- The file size   (in bytes)
- The upload date (the date the file was uploaded)

Obviously, there is a lot more information downloaded if Long Description is checked. This means more on-line time… but the added information can be very helpful. For the DVORAK forum, it's OK to check Long Description… since we only have about 250 files in our forum. However, some forums, such as COOKS, have thousands of files… and a Long Description for each would take a very long time.

Either check Long Description or not, and we'll proceed onto the next step.…

Choosing which Library sections to search in the DVORAK forum:

In the lower-left part of the Create Catalog dialog window is the "Library Section" list. This list will contain all the library sections in the forum that are available to you. (If no library names appear in this window, it means you have not yet "joined" the forum. Refer back to PRIMER.TXT for a complete discussion about joining.)

In the lower-right part of this window is the "Sections to Search" list. If you followed the examples in the "Configuring the DVORAK forum" section of PRIMER.TXT, you should have a couple library sections displayed in this list. (Library names will be "pre-inserted" by NavCIS *if* you checked the left-hand check box next to a library name in that forum's Section Settings dialog box.).

If you want to add more sections to this search list, simply double-click on a section name in the "Library Section" list. Doing this will add that section to the "Sections to Search" list.

If you accidentally include a library section name that you do not want to search, just double-click on it in the "Sections to Search" list; it will disappear.

For this example, please make sure the following library names are in the "Sections to Search" window:

- 1 Free Software
- 2 Windows TE/SE Files
- 6 Node/Logon Scripts
- 7 Modems & Hardware
- 10 Ten Forward Files
- 13 3rd Party Files

You are now ready to retrieve a Catalog!

To create the actual catalog of files, click on the OK button to close the Create Catalog window, and then press the ACTION button on the main toolbar. (The ACTION button is the second from the left.)

NavCIS will go on-line with CompuServe and get the file catalog information. It will also post other actions you defined (if any).

Once it's done, NavCIS will disconnect. Now, just look for the…

The GREEN double-arrow… and what it means:

Notice the green double-arrow in the upper-left corner of the DVORAK forum icon. This means that there is some sort of file action to review or pending. Since you just created a file catalog for the DVORAK forum, this is the pending action.

To view the newly created file catalog:

Double-click on the DVORAK forum icon and then click on the Catalog button. The freshly created catalog list will appear. This is the "short" catalog listing.

The NEW and LONG flags… and what they mean:

If this is the very first time you created a file catalog for the forum, all entries will have a yellow "NEW" flag on the left. The new flag will stay there until the next time you get a catalog listing, or until NavCIS' automatic catalog scanning kicks in and refreshes the catalog.

You will have a blue "LONG" flag on the left-hand side if you requested Long Descriptions.

To view a Long Description:

To see the long description, just double-click on a single file entry in the catalog list. A separate dialog window will open up and display all the information associated with that file.

Downloading a file:

To download a file, just click on the entry once so that it is highlighted if you are using the short catalog list view. If you are looking at a long description, just check the "Download" checkbox in the upper-left.

You can highlight as many files as you want for downloading. Once you have highlighted some files for downloading, press OK and close the catalog list. Return to the main NavCIS screen. Notice the DVORAK forum icon now has…

The green double-arrow indicator again:

Notice the green double-arrow indicator in the upper-left? (If you did not choose any files for downloading, it won't be there.) This indicates that you have a file action: either download a file, upload a file, or view a new catalog or refreshed catalog. If you are following the steps in this primer, you have one or more files to download…

Going online and downloading the file(s):

To download the file(s) that you have just highlighted, click on the ACTION button in the main toolbar. NavCIS will connect to CompuServe and download the file(s). Once the files are downloaded from CompuServe to your hard disk, they can be found…

Where are the downloaded files stored?

NavCIS will place the incoming files, by default, into the DL directory (DL stands for DownLoad). This directory is located under your main NavCIS directory… in most cases it will be \NAVHMI\DL.

NavCIS reminds you automatically:

When NavCIS downloads a file, it will create a message that will show up in that forum's "New:" message queue. The message will display the filename (as it was saved on your hard disk), the size of the file, and the average CPS (Characters Per Second) rate at which the file downloaded from CompuServe. This is a great reminder that will jog your

memory that you downloaded a file and should do something with it. NavCIS will also update the file catalog listing for that forum and place a red "READ" flag next to the entry to remind you that you have already downloaded the file.

Please see the "File Associations and the Launch button in NavCIS" section at the end of this text file to learn how to easily view the files that you have downloaded.

OK, I've downloaded the file. I know where it is… now what do I do with it?

This is a very common question. And this is where the answer gets complicated. In a nut shell, what you do with the file you downloaded depends on what kind of file it is. We'll provide a few examples to get you going, but you'll have to use the organic computer between your ears to recognize what a file is and know how to use it.

ZIP files:

A very common type of file found on CompuServe is the "ZIP" file. Zip files are compressed files. They are compressed for two reasons… to make them smaller so they can be downloaded for less cost, and to allow a bunch of related files to be packed together into one easy to download file.

To "unzip" a zipped file, you'll need to have a utility called PKZip and PKUnzip. PKZip allows you to create your own compressed files, and PKUnzip allows you to uncompress a zipped file back into its original files.

Now, where can you find the PKZip and PKUnzip utility? Glad you asked… this brings us to another form of file commonly found on CompuServe…

Self-extracting EXE files:

A self-extracting EXE file is a compressed file much like a zip file. However, it has an executable "shell" around it which will automatically run and extract the files inside itself when run.

A very good example of a self-extracting EXE file is PK204G.EXE in Library 1 of the DVORAK forum. It contains the PKZip and PKUnzip utility we discussed in the previous paragraph. This is an excellent file to download, so if you don't already have it, we strongly urge you to get it.

Once you've downloaded it, copy it from the DL directory into your DOS or Windows directory. To force it to self-xtract into it's component files, just double-click on it from File Manager… making sure that you have already copied it into the DOS or Windows directory…

Note: PKZip and PKUnzip are really two DOS programs… and as such are often easier to run from within a DOS window.

We're not going to cover all the ways to use PKZip and Unzip, but will share a few quick tips to get you going…

Unzipping a Zipped file:

OK, now that you've got PKUnzip, you can uncompress a zipped file. If you don't have one, please download a file with the ZIP suffix from CompuServe. Then, move that file from the DL directory into a new directory… we often put newly down-loaded files into a directory called \TEMP so that we can unzip and experiment with them.

Assuming that you have moved a ZIP file into \TEMP, and that you are now in a DOS window (just double-click on the MS-DOS icon in the Main group in Windows to open a DOS window), type this:

    C>PKUNZIP filename.ZIP

Where "filename" is the name of the file to be unzipped.
Example:

C>PKUNZIP DVORAK.ZIP

The zip file will be uncompressed and broken into its component files. The next step after unzipping a file is (usually) to look for a file called README.TXT or README.1ST or READ.ME or maybe the name of the program with a TXT suffix. An example: DOOM.TXT

The text file will have instructions on how to run the software you just downloaded and unzipped.

For more information on PKZip, read it's associated text file, and also use the "help switch" to see a quick help summary.
Example:

        C>PKZIP /?

GIF Files:

Another very common type of file on CompuServe is the GIF file. If a file has the GIF suffix, it is a picture of some kind.

NavCIS TE and Pro come with the freeware software, NavImage. NavImage is a program that displays many common graphic file types, including GIF.

The easiest way to use NavImage is to go to the File menu on the main NavCIS screen. Pull down the menu, and you'll see "Image Viewer". Select it. NavImage will now start.

Click on the OPEN button on the left side of the toolbar in NavImage, then select the file you wish to view. Notice at the bottom you can easily change the file type from GIF to BMP, PCX, TIF, TGA, JPG, or ALL formats.

NavImage has very good built-in help, so be sure to use it.

TXT Files:

Files that end with the TXT suffix are "text" files. These files can be easily viewed using Notepad, Wordpad, or even by using the DOS EDIT program… just open a DOS window, then go to the directory that has the text file and open it.
Example:

        C> CD \NAVCIS\DL
        C> EDIT EXAMPLE.TXT

Windows self-extracting, self-installing EXE Files:

A new type of file making a big splash on CompuServe is the Windows compatible self-extracting, self-installing EXE. An example of this is WPROTE.EXE in LIB 1.

To run this type of file is very easy; just use the File | Run command built into either Program Manager or File Manager.

How to tell the difference between a DOS and Windows self-extracting EXE File:

Since both DOS and Windows self extracting EXE files end with an EXE suffix, the best way to tell is to read the long description of the file before you download it.

Usually, the uploader will tell you in the long description whether the file is a DOS or Windows self-extracting EXE file.

File discussion summary:

There are many more types of files on CompuServe than what we have described here. This has been provided simply to give you an overview of some of the most common file types found on CompuServe and what to do with them once you have downloaded them.

If you get stuck, the first thing to do is to look for some kind of documentation file that came with the file… like a README.TXT file. If you need further help, you can always post an e-mail to the person who uploaded the file. In many cases, this will be the author of a shareware program, and, who better than the author to get help from?

Uploading files with NavCIS:

We've covered creating file catalogs and downloading files in some depth. Now it's time to look at the other side of the coin, uploading files to CompuServe. There are two major reasons for uploading files. The first is…

Uploading files to a friend or colleague:

If you want to transfer a file from your computer to someone you know, you will upload the file through Mail. To do this, follow these simple steps:

1. Prepare the file… if it's a big file, you should zip it up so it's smaller. Use PKZip to do this. (Remember the bigger the file, the more it will cost you to upload it… yes, CompuServe will charge you for the time it takes to upload the file…so you want it to be as small as possible.)

2. Drag and drop the File Upload drag 'n drop icon onto the Mail icon.

3. Fill out the dialog box as appropriate.

4. On the subject line, it's a good idea to give the filename… if the recipient is also using NavCIS, he or she will receive the file with its original filename IF you do this.
Example:

    To: Bob Smith 77777,0000
    Subject: EXAMPLE.ZIP program patch from me
    File: C:\PROG\EXAMPLE.ZIP

Use the Browse button to easily find and choose the file.

If you want a receipt when the file was "picked up" by the intended recipient, check the "Receipt" check box.

If you check the "ASCII" checkbox, the file MUST be a text file, and the recipient will receive it as a text message. This should only be used if you understand what it is and why you need it. For now, just ignore it.

Uploading a file to a forum:

The first big difference… uploading files to a forum is FREE. That's right, CompuServe does not charge you any special fees, and even suspends the normal time charge.

Follow the same steps as defined above: pick up the File Upload drag 'n drop cursor and drop it onto the forum you wish to upload the file to.

The Upload a File to XXXXX dialog box will appear. "XXXXX" will be the name of the forum, such as DVORAK. Then fill in the fields… Example:

```
File to Send: COOLPROG.EXE
CIS Filename: QWKLOOK.EXE
LIB: 1 File Uploads
CIS Title: Windows software to look up US zipcodes
Keywords: zipcode zip mail postal postnet
Long Description:

   This Windows self-extracting/self-installing EXE
   contains my Quick Look Zipcode Finder v1.5.  A
   Windows program, it works with Windows 95 and NT
   too. It will create & print mailing labels and even
   supply postnet bar encoding.  Shareware $15.00
```

File to Send… use the Browse button to easily locate the file. (If you use the CC: button you can upload the same file to another forum without having to repeat all the drudgery -- see Help for more information on CC'ing files.)

CIS Filename… the name of the file as you want it to appear on CompuServe itself. Format: 8.3 (like DOS file names).

LIB… choose the library you want to place the file in. Many forums restrict uploads to one library, usually called File Uploads or something similar. If this is the case, you'll need to send the SYSOP of the forum a message asking them to move the file to LIB x after they have scanned the file for viruses.

A quick note about viruses:

All files are scanned for viruses by the forum sysops before being released to the public. As an uploader, you should be careful not to let any viruses get into your uploaded files. Two reasons: first, you could contaminate many other users, and second, if your uploads are found to have a virus, you may be denied file uploading privileges on CompuServe.

Back to the forum file upload:

CIS Title… titles can be up to 49 characters long. Try to be succinct and descriptive.

Keywords… keywords are supplied by you to help others when they are searching for a specific type or kind of file. At least one keyword must be supplied. Separate each key word with a space.

Long Description… this can be up to 549 characters long. Use this space to "sell" your file, as well as to instruct the potential downloader on what sort of file it is. See the previous example.

File Associations and the Launch button in NavCIS:

If you have an application associated with the file type of the file you just downloaded, you can click on the Launch button to view the file. For example, if you download a file called READTHIS.TXT, and you have the TXT file type associated with Windows Notepad, clicking on the Launch button will open the READTHIS.TXT file inside Notepad.

 To create a file association in Windows 3.x:

1. Go into File Manager and select File | Associate from the main menu.

2. Enter the file type (e.g. TXT) into the box next to "Files with Extension:".

3. Then, in the "Associate With:" field, enter the path (disk drive and directory) of the application that you want to associate with the file type extension. If you don't know where the application is, click on the Browse button to search for it.

 To create a file association in Windows 95:

- 1. Double-click on the My Computer icon.
- 2. In the View menu, click Options, and then click the File Types tab.
- 3. Click the New Type button.
- 4. Specify a description (e.g. TXT File) for the file type and the filename extension (e.g. TXT) associated with this type of file.
- 5. Click the New button to define an action for this file type.
- 6. In the "Action:" box, enter the word Open. In the "Application used to perform action:" box, enter the path (disk drive and directory) of the application that should run when you want to open files that have the file type specified in step #4 above. Use the Browse button if you aren't sure where the application is.

Well, that wraps it up!

There is a lot more we could discuss about files… but since this is a primer, it's job is to introduce you to files and how to get at them. Now it's up to you to use NavCIS' extensive, built-in help to learn about all the other cool things you can do with files…

Enjoy file up- and downloading!

Legal stuff
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WINSOCKS AND NAVCIS 1.76

"What is a WinSock?" "How do I use it?" "Do I need to use it?" These are questions that we have been hearing ever since the release of NavCIS 1.76. This file will explain WinSocks as they relate to NavCIS 1.76.

What is a WinSock?
A WinSock is a file that acts as a translator between the Internet's TCP/IP protocol and Windows. The WinSock works in conjunction with a dialer program to provide a PPP connection to the Internet. This allows a Windows application (such as NavCIS 1.76) to communicate with the Internet.

Do I need to use it in NavCIS 1.76?
No. Actually, most users will not want to use a WinSock with NavCIS.   If you want (or need) to connect to CompuServe by going through the Internet, a WinSock is required. If you don't want (or need) to go through the Internet, then you will probably not want to use a WinSock in NavCIS. (Please see the "Disadvantages of WinSocks" section below.)

Why would anybody want (or need) to go through the Internet for a CompuServe connection? Many users don't have a local CompuServe access number, so they have to pay long distance charges to connect to CompuServe. Purchasing an account with an Internet Access Provider (IAP) can help alleviate this problem. Accounts with an IAP usually cost around $20 dollars each month, and many of them allow unlimited connect time. Since most IAPs don't charge by the minute (as do long distance calls), one can save significant amounts of money. In fact, if you have an account with an IAP for any reason, you can use it to connect to CompuServe.

Advantages of WinSocks
There are two main advantages of using a WinSock connection in NavCIS. First, as noted above, if you already have access to the Internet, you can save on long distance charges if you don't have a local CompuServe access number.

Second, WinSocks allow one or more applications to communicate on the Internet at the same time. For example, you can send a file to CompuServe with NavCIS while using a Web browser to surf the World Wide Web. Disconnecting

NavCIS from CompuServe won't disconnect the Web browser connection. In other words, two or more applications can use the same telephone line at the same time.

Disadvantages of WinSocks
There is one major disadvantage of using a WinSock with NavCIS. Speed. Because a WinSock connection has to travel through the Internet before reaching CompuServe, slowdowns will occur. Slowdowns of 20 - 30% aren't uncommon. Therefore, we recommend that you use a regular direct-dial connection (as opposed to a WinSock connection) to access CompuServe, unless a WinSock connection is absolutely necessary.

How do I set up NavCIS to use a WinSock?
If you decide that you want to use a WinSock with NavCIS 1.76, you will need to acquire a winsock.dll and its respective dialer, and configure them properly so that they work correctly. Two popular WinSock/dialer pairs are the CompuServe Internet Dialer and Trumpet. The CompuServe Internet Dialer can be obtained by GOing WINCIM and downloading the WCINST.EXE file. If you have trouble with a WinSock/dialer pair, please consult their developer for assistance.

Once you have them working correctly, copy the winsock.dll file to the \NavHMI directory. Next, start NavCIS 1.76 and select Configuration | Session Settings from the main menu. Next, in the "Connector:" field, choose the WINSOCK selection. When you make this selection, the LAN button will become enabled. Click on this button and make sure that the "Host Name:" field says gateway.compuserve.com and the "Connect Timeout:" value is set at around 30 seconds (if you have problems connecting, you may want to increase this value). That's all there is to it! The next time you logon with NavCIS 1.76, you will connect to CompuServe using a WinSock.

SPEED ISSUES IN NAVCIS 1.76

NavCIS was created several years ago for one main reason: gather data quickly to decrease the amount of time online. NavCIS allows the user to connect to CompuServe, gather enormous amounts of useable data, then jump off-line, all in a matter of only seconds or minutes. Through the years, NavCIS has been just as fast or faster. So, why the slowdown in a couple online functions in NavCIS 1.76? Well, there are a few reasons.

Downloads
Downloading files has been slowed due to the fact that the communications engine now being used in NavCIS only allows smaller packets of data (508 bytes) to be received from CompuServe. In the past, NavCIS was able to receive packet sizes of up to 2048 bytes. Using larger packet sizes will increase the speed of the download. So, why is NavCIS using this communications engine if it isn't as fast as the communications engine used in the past? CompuServe will soon be switching completely to a Host Micro Interface (HMI) protocol. In order for NavCIS to be able to interact with this new protocol, we are forced to use CompuServe's proprietary communications engine, called the "CCT".

Uploads
Uploading files to CompuServe has never been fast for NavCIS (or any other product). This is due to what is known as "choke control". Choke control is the manner in which files are received by CompuServe. When you upload a file, it must be written to the hard drive on one of the server computers at CompuServe. At the same time, other users may be uploading files. This creates a "traffic jam". The choke control mechanism on CompuServe allows part of one file upload to be written to the server. Then it allows part of another file upload to be written. This continues back and forth, each file upload is given a turn to be written to the server until each file has been completely written. For this reason, as the number of uploads at any one time increases, the slower your upload will be.

NISA forums
NISA is an acronym for New Information Services Architecture. When NavCIS is in a NISA forum, it can be very slow. This is caused by problems in the CompuServe hardware and software used specifically in these new forums. As soon as these problems have been eliminated by CompuServe, NISA forums will be very quick and will be able to accomodate even more users than the previous type of forums.

Switching between forums

When NavCIS exits one forum and enters another, slowdowns can occur due to the fact that one forum will be physically located on a different server than the other forum. This slowdown will be compounded if one of these forums is of the NISA type. Switching from regular forums to the NISA forums has been timed at up to 3 minutes! This perceived "hanging" time will decrease as the transition from regular forums to NISA is improved by CompuServe.

WinSock connections

Finally, there will be a slowdown if you are connecting to CompuServe through a WinSock connection. Using a WinSock connection in NavCIS can be 20 - 30% slower than a regular direct-dial connection due to the fact that all data will have to travel through the Internet. In other words, data will travel from NavCIS to your Internet Access Provider, and then to CompuServe. This is very time consuming. Therefore, one should use a WinSock connection to CompuServe only if necessary. Please see WINSOCK.WRI here in this library for more information regarding WinSock usage and NavCIS.

ISDN WHEN? STRFOCUS

BABY BELLS REDISCOVER FAST ISDN SERVICE, BUT CRITICS SAY IT MAY SOON BE OBSOLETE

By LESLIE CAULEY
Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal
CTSY CIS ISDN Forum

To hear the Baby Bells tell it, ordering an advanced telephone line that can simultaneously juggle voice, data and video is as easy as picking up the phone. "We're Not Just Talk Anymore!" screams a Nynex Corp. print ad for so-called ISDN services, "Integrated Services Digital Network." It offers a toll-free 800 number for speedy installation. Pacific Telesis

Group boasts that California customers can order its "Way-Fast Phone Lines" and get them installed, well, way fast. In another ad, a deli owner gushes on about how "simple" Bell Atlantic Corp.'s ISDN lines are to use.

Despite the consumer pitch, getting an ISDN line requires customers to clear a thicket of technical hurdles, wait weeks for delivery -- and pay premium prices for the privilege. "ISDN is as easy to operate as a nuclear power plant, and as convenient as an iron lung," says Michael Finneran, president of dBrn Associates Inc., a Hewlett, N.Y.-based consultant on ISDN services.

The seven Baby Bells have had these superfast phone lines for a decade, but have signed up fewer than half a million business customers in all that time. Now the Bells have rediscovered ISDN. They hope to turn the snazzy phone lines from a business luxury into a consumer product that cashes in on the booming Internet. The global computer network relies on antiquated phone lines to deliver data to millions of computer users.

But if history winds up repeating itself, ISDN could turn out to be the best technology that never happened. Some say the Bells frittered away a decade-long technological lead, stumbling over marketing miscues, incompatible designs and a lack of focus. And even though demand for the faster phone lines has started to boom, the Bells risk getting one-upped by far faster lines and "cable modems" planned by cable-TV systems. The cable modem and other technologies on the way threaten to render ISDN obsolete.

"I think it's time to write the obituary on ISDN," says Ken McGee of Gartner Group. The Bells themselves could render the service useless as they install new fiber-optic networks. While it's commendable that the Bells have finally awakened to the promise of ISDN, he says, it's simply too late. "Nice landing, wrong airport. It's time to turn the page and move on," Mr. McGee says.

Bell executives concede they didn't do a very good job in past years at marketing ISDN, but say they are pushing hard to move the technology to the forefront. "We were slow to meet demand, slow to realize this tremendous opportunity," says James Moore, a marketing vice president at Nynex. "We're now playing catch-up."

Most of the technical snags have now been solved, and the cost of setting up an ISDN line has dropped from $1,500 a few years ago to as little as $300 currently. That decline and demand from people who "telecommute" and surf the Internet have pushed ISDN orders off the charts. Most Bells expect a four- to five-fold increase in ISDN installations in 1996. Mr. Finneran, the ISDN consultant, forecasts total installations of seven million by the end of the decade, from the current 450,000 lines.

Never known as savvy marketers, the Bells have continued to price the services beyond the reach of most consumers. And some Bell companies are now trying to increase their rates, undercutting their aspirations of making ISDN a mass-market product. Most Bells charge monthly fees for ISDN of $25 to $70, plus usage charges of as much as a dime a minute. Because ISDN uses two "channels" or data paths, those per-minute charges can double. Cable companies are expected to offer their digital service in a year or two at a more affordable flat rate of about $30 a month and unlimited usage.

Some Bell companies are moving to flat-rate pricing with unlimited usage, but the fees tend to be higher, at $60 or more a month. So unless the Bells reverse course and cut pricing, consumers will have a clear choice between $30 a month for cable modems and twice that or more for ISDN. "It's a no-brainer," says Carter Burden III, president of Digital Telemedia Inc., a New York Internet access provider that offers ISDN service.

No matter how they price ISDN, the Bells still have a long way to go to make it consumer-ready. Arthur Bushkin, a former Bell Atlantic division president who wanted an ISDN line for his office in Washington, had to spend hours on the phone with Bell Atlantic's customer-service staff. "They were friendly, but there's no question that ISDN isn't ready as an easy-to-use consumer product," he says.

Ivan Seidenberg had to wait three months for Nynex to install a line in his home in 1993 -- and he was vice chairman of the company at the time. Currently, only about 2,500 of Nynex's 10,000 installers are ISDN-trained. "The good news is that there's enormous demand" for ISDN services, says Mr. Seidenberg, now Nynex's chairman and chief executive officer. "The bad news is that we're not as ready as fast we should be" to respond.

ISDN EXPLAINED

By Ron Higgin [OS/2 Advisor]
CTSY CIS ISDN Forum

ISDN stands for "Integrated Services Digital Network". It similar to your the phone service you're familiar with in that it is a switched network; that is, your ISDN line gets assigned at least one telephone number and the line can be used to either place (dial) or receive "calls". However, that's where the similarity ends.

Your regular telephone lines are analog. However, your computer "speaks" digital. Your existing modem (MOdulator/DEModulator) converts digital signals produced by your computer into analog signals that can be sent across normal analog telephone lines.

The bandwidth of standard telephone lines is limited, and this signal conversion process is quite error prone one the analog signals hit the telephone company's equipment. This is the reason why the higher the line speed your modem connects at, the higher the probability of transmission problems. Indeed, the latest 28,800 baud (V.34) modems seldom (sometimes NEVER) connect at a line speed of 28.8Kbits because, simply put, the quality of normal analog telephone lines isn't good enough to sustain that speed. For these modems, a connect speed of 24Kbits or 21Kbits is more often than not the best you can do.

Enter ISDN.

Actually ISDN has been around for a decade or more. However it's only recently that the telephone companies have been actively promoting the service; most likely because they weren't prepared for mass deployment of ISDN until recently. This is certainly, in part, due to the fact that the telephone companies have to upgrade/replace their Central Office, or CO, switching equipment in order to support ISDN lines and connections.

ISDN is a totally digital service. While it is, with special equipment (installed in YOUR home), capable of supporting ordinary voice calls and FAX, the service is primarily intended for (and provides the real benefit) when applied to digital communications equipment, such as your computer.

Since your computer already "speaks" digital, a modem is NOT needed. However, a special ISDN-to-computer terminal adapter (called a "TA") is required. A network terminating device (NT1) is also required, although these days the NT1 is most often integrated into the TA hardware.

The NT1 serves as the interface between the telephone company's ISDN network and the TA. Simply stated, the ISDN telephone cable plugs into the NT1 (or TA, if the NT1 is integrated therein) in an identical manner to the way you plug an ordinary analog telephone line into the back of your existing modem. The TA serves as the interface between, for example, your computer and the NT1, or for a TA with an integrated NT1, your computer and the ISDN network.

There are many different types of TAs, each designed to handle the attachment of a specific class of non-ISDN capable equipment. While your computer does "speak" digital, it doesn't "speak" ISDN. Consequently you need a TA that adapts the digital language of your computer to that understood by the ISDN network. Other types of TAs are available to, for example, permit attachment of analog based telephone equipment (non-ISDN telephones, FAX machines, etc.) to an ISDN line. Just as there are many different classes of TAs, there are multiple TA implementations within class. Specifically, there are multiple types of TAs that will allow your computer to use an ISDN line.

The Motorola BitSurfr (and similar serially attached TAs) is one type of TA. This is an external modem-like device that goes between one of your computer's serial (COM) ports and the ISDN line (the BitSurfr, and like devices, have a built-in NT1). These devices are unique in that they respond to many of the common modem commands; that is, they conform

to the standard Hayes "AT" command set. This allows them to be used with ordinary modem based communications software.

In addition to providing a TA to adapt the computer's serial port to the ISDN line, the BitSurfr type devices most often (but NOT always) provide one or more POTS (Plain Old Telephone Service) ports (RJ-11 jacks) to which you can attach any old telephone or FAX machine. These are in effect, additional (integrated) TAs designed to allow analog telephone equipment to be attached to the ISDN line. In absence of POTS ports, you'd have to purchase (expensive) digital telephones and/or FAX machine in order to connect them to an ISDN line.

The Motorola "BitSurfr" in fact provides one POTS port to which you can attach your existing analog modem, or any other analog device (telephone, FAX machine, etc.). The basic device sells for about $250 (street price), with a more sophisticated one (that supports multipoint protocol channel "bonding"), called the "BitSurfer Pro" runs about $100 more. The basic difference between the two is that the "Pro" model will run (with "BONDing" … more about this later) at speeds up to 128Mbits. However, at that speed most non-intelligent serial devices (COM ports) will not be able to keep up. Generally an intelligent (co-processed) serial card is required to achieve such speeds over a serially connected TA.

To use ISDN you have to order an ISDN line from your telephone company. Note that ISDN lines are NOT available in every locale. Indeed, the telephone company usually requires that your house be located no more than 2 miles from the CO providing your service, and of course the CO must have ISDN capable switches installed.

Since ISDN has (at least the so called "Basic Rate Interface", or BRI, does) the SAME wiring requirements as your existing POTS equipment, your telephone company will often offer to one of your existing analog lines to an ISDN line, although you MAY have to change your telephone number in order to do this. In some locales the telephone company does NOT even charge an installation fee when converting an existing line.

Each (BRI) ISDN line consists of two 56Kbit or 64Kbit "Bearer" ("B") channels PLUS a 16Kbit Digital ("D") signaling channel forming the so called "2B+D" service offering. The CO switch capabilities determine whether the "B" channels are 56Kbit or 64Kbit. The "D" channel is used for signaling operations such as activating the ringer on an attached telephone.

Your computer, with an appropriate TA installed, communicates over one or both of the "B" channels. If your TA supports it, you can be simultaneously connected to two different ISDN locations (for example, an Internet service provider and the LAN at your place of employment) .. OR .. with BONDing (Bandwidth ON Demand") capability, to the SAME ISDN location; the latter providing you with a 112Kbit or 128Kbit connection.

All this is great BUT your ISDN TA can only "talk to" another COMPATIBLE ISDN TA. You may remember the old HST line protocol supported by US Robotics modems; the modem could only "talk" HST if it was connected to another USR modem with HST capability. Well, this is the same thing EXCEPT that it is NOT optional. In other words the box on the other end of the line (whose telephone number you cause your TA to dial) MUST be an ISDN TA (NOT a modem) AND it MUST be compatible with your TA. Unfortunately "standards" in the ISDN world have been slow coming, so it is important to check with the locations (supporting the ISDN connections you want to connect to) to insure they can support the TA you are planning to purchase.

Realistically, ISDN is most useful for connecting to the Internet, through an Internet service provider that supports ISDN connections. This will allow you to "surf the net" at a speed equal to at least 56Kbits (57,600 baud), AND the connection will be 100% reliable since you'll be on a fully digital network (no signal conversion is required) … so you'll really get a 56Kbit (or better) connection.

If you do decide to go with ISDN you won't want to throw away your modem just yet since you'll continue to need it to connect to non-ISDN capable sites such as BBS systems. Note that your existing modem CAN be connected to a POTS port of the ISDN TA, if it has one. While Compuserve does provide some direct ISDN ports (telephone numbers), its probably easier to (if you have an Internet service provider that supports ISDN) simply connect to Compuserve via their Internet node, "compuserve.com".

The bottom line here is that to use ISDN (assuming its available in your locale) you need to:

- Order an ISDN line from your telephone company. Note that you shouldn't do this until you have selected your TA as the telephone company has to "provision" the line for the specific TA you select.

- Shop for a TA, insuring the locations you want to connect to support the TA you have selected.

- Install the TA. For "BitSurfer" class TAs this is no more difficult than installing a modem.

- Assuming you want Internet access, select an Internet service provider (ISP) that supports your TA. There's a good list of ISPs on the Internet itself, at Web Site "TheList.com". The list is maintained by telephone area code making it very easy to locate an ISP in your area that supports ISDN connections.

Well, that's about the long and the short of it. I hope I haven't bored you (or anyone else) with this rather long winded dissertation on the subject of your post.

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CONTENTS

APPLE FOR SALE

Apple Computer is for sale, but no buyers have materialized yet. Reportedly, Sun Microsystems was in discussions over a buyout as recently as two weeks ago, but backed off over Apple's price tag. Others with whom Apple CEO Michael Spindler has broached the subject include Hewlett-Packard, Motorola, Toshiba, Sony and IBM, but so far, no company has been willing to meet Spindler's price. (Wall Street Journal 19 Jan 96 B2)

SCIENTOLOGISTS WIN INTERNET COPYRIGHT CASE

A federal judge has ruled in favor of the Church of Scientology in a case in which the church sued a person who posted onto the Internet some ''secret" documents on which it holds a copyright. The defendant had tried unsuccessfully to argue that the Church of Scientology had lost its rights to the documents when they were included in publicly available materials published in connection with another court case. (New York Times 20 Jan 96 p19)

SONY AIMS FOR 20% OF PC MARKET

Sony Corp., which is poised to enter the U.S. PC market in a big way, isn't thinking small -- "I think we can earn at least half the share of Packard Bell," says an optimistic Sony senior managing director. Packard Bell dominated approximately 40% of the home PC market last year. Sony's plans include two or three PC models launched in the U.S. this year, with subsequent ventures planned for Japan and Europe. (St. Petersburg Times 19 Jan 96 E6)

COMPAQ REJOINS "INTEL INSIDE" CAMPAIGN

After yanking the "Intel Inside" logo off its computers two years ago, Compaq Computer is rejoining the highly successful chip marketing program. Compaq's plan to replace Intel microprocessors with those from Cyrix and Advanced Micro Devices was not successful, and Intel's lock on the Pentium market drove Compaq back into its arms. "If you can't beat them, join them, or rejoin them," says an analyst for Smith Barney. At the time they pulled out, Compaq resented Intel's attempts to shift attention from the computer maker to the component maker, but in the past two years, its lead in market share has made those concerns less important. (Wall Street Journal 19 Jan 96 B2)

MOTOROLA PULLS OUT OF NATIONWIDE VENTURE

Motorola's Cellular Infrastructure Group has been "unable to reach acceptable financial and commercial contract terms" with the Sprint Telecommunications Venture. The partnership, which includes Sprint, Tele-Communications Inc., Comcast Corp. and Cox Communications, is scheduled to construct a $3-billion nationwide wireless network over the next two years to be used for personal communications services. A Motorola VP says the dispute arose out of "unusual terms related to damages and financing" required by Sprint. (Wall Street Journal 19 Jan 96 B2)

COOPERATION ON TV VIOLENCE

The chair of the Canadian radio and TV regulatory commission says he's now confident that Canada's threat to block some American programming because of violence or nudity is no longer necessary.   The office of U,S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor pledged to urge American border stations to adhere to future Canadian action against such programs.   Two Fox affiliates already are participating in Canadian testing of V-chip technology for children's programming. (Toronto Globe & Mail 20 Jan 96 B2)

IBM FACES BRIBE INVESTIGATIONS IN ARGENTINA

IBM is the subject of investigations by the US Securities and Exchange Commission and the FBI over allegations that the IBM Argentine subsidiary paid bribes to win a quarter of a million contract with the state-owned Banco Nacion. (Financial Times 18 Jan 96 p6)

INTERNET CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Newfoundland set a national precedent when they charged a man with possession of child pornography downloaded from the Internet. Police say they aren't about to start randomly breaking into people's computers and will not act without a complaint. (Ottawa Citizen 19 Jan 96 A3)

FLEXIBLE MONITORS

Now there are computer monitors that can be flipped around for a "portrait"-shaped screen, ideal for viewing vertically oriented Web pages. The MicroScan 17x by ADI Systems and the Pivot 1700 from Portrait Display Labs can be used either as a conventional monitor, or as a display that's about 13 inches high by about 9 1/2 inches wide. Flexibility doesn't come cheap, however -- each one costs more than double a conventional model -- about $925. (Business Week 22 Jan 96 p22)

AT&T TO ACQUIRE STAKE IN SATELLITE TV COMPANY

AT&T is investing $137.5 million in Hughes DirecTV, giving it a 2.5% stake in the direct broadcasting service. The arrangement will allow AT&T to offer customers TV as well as long-distance telephone services, and charge for both in a single bill. The move is one more step in AT&T's plan to provide one-stop-shopping for all communications services. (New York Times 23 Jan 96 C1)

MCI GETS TOUGH ON SPAMMING

MCI has announced a new policy aimed at discouraging "spamming" – the distribution of unwanted junk e-mail. The policy covers MCI's e-mail, Internet access, and World Wide Web services. "We reserve the right to automatically disconnect and deny access to any MCI customer who violates this spamming policy, and we will take swift and corrective action," says the marketing director for MCI's Business Enterprises. (Investor's Business Daily 25 Jan 96 A8)

NETSCAPE CUTS DEALS WITH VERIFONE, AOL

VeriFone Inc., whose electronic payment systems are used in 75% of U.S. credit card transactions, will work with Netscape Communications to develop software for processing financial transactions on the Internet. The software will be able to handle a variety of credit cards and will be designed to work with merchants', customers', and banks' computers using existing processing structures. (Investor's Business Daily 23 Jan 96 A9) In separate news, Netscape and America Online are in talks over using Netscape's Navigator software on America Online. "They're the only two companies that seem to have a viable shot a balancing the Microsoft hegemony," says an industry watcher. (Wall Street Journal 22 Jan 96 A3)

SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE INDUSTRY

Cygnus Support has grown into a $10-million-a-year company by making "free software affordable" -- while it charges nothing for its source code, companies pay it to modify the software, adapt it to new hardware, and answer their technical questions. Cygnus's software-for-free, service-for-fee strategy may be a forerunner of the future model for the highly competitive software industry. By making the software available for free, it "provides a straightforward mechanism for a group to innovate rapidly and yet remain united by a common core of technology." (Scientific American Jan 96 p35)

ISDN VS. CABLE MODEMS

After years of neglecting ISDN, Baby Bells are finally beginning to use a consumer-oriented approach to the marketing of ISDN services – but industry observers say it's probably too little, too late. "I think it's time to write the obituary on ISDN," says a Gartner Group analyst. "Nice launching, wrong airport. It's time to turn the page and move on," he notes, referring to the cable companies' plans to offer high-speed, high-capacity access for a fraction of ISDN's costs. (Wall Street Journal 23 Jan 96 B7)

RUSSIAN CHIPS

Russian chip factories increased their output by 10% in 1995, and sales are expected to rise 7% this year, according to British consulting firm Future Horizons. And chip exports are taking off -- from $316,000 in 1993 to $19.4 million for the first 10 months of 1995. "The industry has definitely turned around," says Future Horizons' chairman, and while their chips tend to be outdated by U.S. standards, Russian firms are doing a brisk business with countries such as China and some of the southeast Asian nations. (Business Week 22 Jan 96 p92)

INTERNET TRANSLATION SERVICE

Globalink offers a Translate Direct service that does a quick turnaround job translating Web pages and other Internet documents to and from English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. The company has human translators available 24 hours a day. The URL is < http://www.globalink.com > and is only accessible using the Netscape Navigator browser. The company can be reached by phone at 800-255-5660. (Internet World Feb 96 p16)

NEW YORK TIMES WEB SITE

The New York Times Web site < http://www.nytimes.com > offers news and feature articles from the printed

newspaper, classified ads, and various other features. Subscribers will be able to copy articles to their own computers for $1.95 each. (New York Times 22 Jan 96 C7)

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING ON CABLE TV

Comcast, the third-largest cable operator, is preempting three hours a week of programming by cable networks such as MTV and USA Network in order to run educational programs that it will produce itself or buy from other sources. A Comcast executive says, "The networks will hate it, but at the end of the day someone has to step forward and do something." (USA Today 23 Jan 96 1B)

FIBEROPTIC LINK AROUND THE GLOBE

A consortium led by AT&T Submarine Systems in the U.S. and NDD Submarine Cable Systems in Japan has begun a $1.5 billion project ("Flag," or Fiberoptic Link Around the Globe) to lay undersea fiberoptic cables from England to Japan, with landing points in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, in order to provide 120,000 64kbps circuits. About 50 telecommunication companies from around the world have agreed to purchase capacity on the cable. (Financial Times 19 Jan 96 p4)

CLINTON PROPOSES COMPUTERS IN ALL CLASSROOMS

In his State of the Union speech this week President Clinton said: "Every classroom in America must be connected to the information superhighway, with computers, good software and well-trained teachers. We are working with the telecommunications industry, educators and parents to connect 20% of the classrooms in California by this spring, and every classroom and library in America by the year 2000." The Department of Education's preliminary cost estimate for the proposal is about $10 billion; a McKinsey & Co. consulting study completed last summer for the National information Infrastructure Advisory Council estimated the cost for the kind of system proposed by the President (i.e., a computer for every four or five students) to be about $47 billion. (New York Times 25 Jan 96 A9)

IBM DECREE-LIFTING IS AN INCOMPLETE SUCCESS

A federal judge has terminated much of the 1956 consent decree against IBM, intended at the time to level the playing field between Big Blue and its competitors, but two critical parts of the decree remain in force. Those cover IBM's mainframe computer and AS/400 midrange computer lines, a caveat that left IBM officials less than ecstatic over the ruling: "Even as amended by the judge's order, the decree represents an unwarranted limitation on legitimate business conducted by IBM," says a company statement. On the positive side, the ruling lifts restrictions on IBM's services operations, currently the fastest growing portion of its business. (Wall Street Journal 24 Jan 96 B7)

SOFTWARE MAKERS SHOULD LOOK TO PATENT LAW FOR PROTECTION

Patent attorney Peter Trzyna says copyright law increasingly is unsuitable for protecting computer software: "The law is changing all the time, especially computer law. It's moving against copyright protection for software. The doctrine of look and feel (the idea that the basic appearance of a program can be protected) has been pared way back. It used to be viewed that computer programs as a whole could be protected by a copyright. But not anymore." He recommends using the patent process for protection: "Essentially every judge on the court of appeals has said software is a patentable subject matter. It's got to be new and not obvious, and those are the same principles that have guided patent law for years in other fields." (Investor's Business Daily 24 Jan 96 A6)

NEW WAVE OF INTERNET IPOS ON THE HORIZON

Still flush from the rush experienced during Netscape's initial public offering, Wall Street is bracing for another onslaught of fledgling Net companies. Waiting in the wings are IDT Corp., an Internet services provider and discount telephone company; CyberCash Inc., which provides security for online transactions; Raptor Systems, which makes anti-hacker/cracker software; VocalTec, an Israeli company involved in Internet telephony; and many others. Still, the drop in Net stocks has traders a little jittery: "If you get too many of these Internet IPOs, you could saturate the industry," says one mutual fund portfolio manager. (Business Week 29 Jan 96 p60)

FINANCIER PROMISES $5 MILLION FOR INTERNET ACCESS

International financier George Soros is planning a new $5-million foundation dedicated to the development of Internet access for hospitals, museums and libraries in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, as well as South Africa and Haiti. A spokesman for Soros's Open Society Institute says expanded Internet access can play an important role in nurturing democracy in these countries. (Chronicle of Higher Education 26 Jan 96 A17)

GENIE SOLD TO YOVELLE RENAISSANCE

General Electric's online GEnie service will be sold to privately held Yovelle Renaissance, which plans to transform GEnie into a World Wide Web service. Yovelle, which was formed for the acquisition, is linked to IDT Corp., a New Jersey-based Internet access provider. (Wall Street Journal 24 Jan 96 B7)

SUITE DEALS FOR LOTUS

Lotus Development Corp. has signed deals with AST Research, Epson America Inc. and IBM to bundle Lotus's SmartSuite software with selected PCs. Lotus says the new arrangements will make its software available to 5.5 million PC users this year. (Investor's Business Daily 25 Jan 96 A8)

INTEL LINES UP SUPPORT FOR NEW DATA CARD

Intel has attracted backing from Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, Compaq Computer, Philips NV, Fujitsu, Sharp and Advanced Micro Devices for its Miniature Card, a new generation of tiny storage devices expected to be used in everything from cellular phones to digital cameras. Intel's design is rivaled by Compact Flash, a competing standard backed by SanDisk, along with supporters such as Motorola, Apple Computer, Eastman Kodak and NEC Corp. SanDisk already is shipping some of its cards, and Intel expects to begin shipping in the spring. (Wall Street Journal 24 Jan 96 B7)

CISCO WILL ACQUIRE TGV SOFTWARE

In its ever-expanding strategy of linking Internet capabilities to its networking products, Cisco has agreed to buy TGV software Inc. for about $100 million in stock. In recent months, Cisco has acquired Network Translation Inc. and Terayon Corp., and has made investments in several small computer network equipment and software companies. (Investor's Business Daily 25 Jan 96 A9)

CRUISING THE NET IN THE FRIENDLY SKIES

The Network Connection of Atlanta is developing InterView, an extension of the AirView in-flight entertainment system. InterView will add Net surfing to AirView's menu of movie-viewing, computer games, music videos, and faxing functions from monitors installed in passengers' seatbacks. Both systems are slated for delivery next June. (Information Week 8 Jan 96 p10)

INSECURITY FEARS

A North American study on Internet security by Ernst & Young says that companies fear doing business via the Internet. Companies with a direct Internet connection are concerned that outsiders can gain access to their systems and data bases, and companies that transmit sensitive financial information worry about the security of these transactions.   (Toronto Globe & Mail 25 Jan 96 B5)

TV DECODER AGREEMENT IN GERMANY

Two major rival German media organizations, Bertelsmann and Kirch, have agreed to collaborate on development of a pay-per-view standard decoding box for digital TV. By working together rather than pursuing competing standards, the groups will realize considerable savings on a system that will cost several billion Deutschmarks in startup costs. (Financial Times 22 Jan 96 p15)

PRIVACY OF PERSONAL DATA

Canada's largest retail brokerage, Midland Walwyn, is urging the government to takes steps to ensure that the country's major banks do not "abuse" the massive amounts of personal data on customers contained in their computers. The

brokerage is worried about the enormous potential for invasions of privacy and conflict of interest as banking conglomerates consolidate their customer data. (Toronto Star 25 Jan 96 A1)

TELECOM "GIVEAWAY" CONTROVERSY MAY BE DEFERRED

Senate Commerce Committee chair Larry Pressler (R., SD) is suggesting that a controversial provision of the telecommunications legislation be removed from that legislation and addressed in a separate bill. The provision has been attacked by Senator Bob Dole and other Republicans as a "giveaway" of valuable airwave spectrum to TV broadcasters for uses such as high-definition television. (New York Times 25 Jan 96 C6)

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE
The CAUSE organization's annual conference on information technology in higher education is scheduled for the end of this month in New Orleans. The conference will bring together administrators, academicians and other managers of information resources. For full conference information check out < http://cause-www.colorado.edu > or send e-mail to conf@cause.colorado.edu.

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KIDS COMPUTING CORNER
Frank Sereno, Editor

The Kids' Computing Corner
edited by Frank Sereno

Welcome to The Kids' Computing Corner. This week we have two reviews. Angelo Marasco reviews Microsoft's The Magic Bus Explores the Ocean while I review Edmark's Thinkin' Things Collection 3. I'm still gathering data on The Learning Company's Score Builder for the SAT. I have to say that I am very impressed with the depth of information and the ease of use of this outstanding program. Look for a full review in next week's column. At the end of the column I will again list the rules for the Muppet software contest. Here's your last chance to win a fine educational program for your child, local school or day care facility. There is nothing to buy and no tricky questions to answer!

Thinkin' Things Collection 3

Hybrid format CD-ROM for Windows and Macintosh
for ages 7 to 13
approximately $40
from Edmark
P.O. Box 97021
Redmond, WA 98073-9721
206-556-8484

Program Requirements

IBM		Macintosh	
CPU:	486/33	CPU:	Color Macintosh
RAM:	8 megs	RAM:	5 megs
OS:	Windows 3.1	OS:	System 7.0.1
Video:	640 by 480 with 256 colors	Video:	256 colors
Hdisk:	2 megs	Hdisk:	?
CD-ROM:	Double-speed recommended	CD-ROM:	Double-speed recommended
Misc.:	Sound card, microphone optional		

Edmark adds another award-winning program to its line of educational software with the publishing of Thinkin' Things Collection 3. This fine program promotes the development of abstract, creative and logical thought through five entertaining activities. TT3 will delight and challenge both young and old.

Trading is the game when you play Stocktopus. The player starts each round with a number of items in his portfolio. He must trade items to reach a goal. Stocktopus assists the player by placing phone calls to brokers around the world to complete trades. An added feature is that these brokers say words or phrases in their native language and then translate it to English, thus allowing the player to learn a few words of that language. The difficulty of the game increases as the player progresses. He also progresses on the Top 100 Traders list. This gives the player incentive to continue playing. Trading hints are available at the press of an icon. This activity promotes deduction and logic.

Carving BLOX is an experiment in abstract and creative thinking. Players start with a plain "metal" play field which can be customized with interesting tools. Bore holes, dig grooves or place ramps anywhere on the play field. Balls can be placed on the field to be caromed against objects, glide down grooves and fall through holes. Players can experiment with virtual physics by adjusting the gravity, changing the tilt or manipulating other factors. TT3 provides many "ideas" which can be loaded into the activity and manipulated. These ideas also serve as inspiration for the player's creations, which he can save to disk.

Photo Twister involves the manipulation of photographs. Twenty-two effects are available. These are represented by little green men carrying various tools. Photo Twister has two modes. In Creativity Mode, a photo is placed on the screen and the player can experiment with the many effects. Favorite photos can be saved for future viewing. This exercise encourages artistic creativity without regard to painting or drawing skills. Question and Answer Mode promotes analytical thought. Two photos are presented on screen. The one on the left is the original photo while the right photo has been modified. The task is to deduce which tools must be used on the left photo in the proper order to duplicate the right photo. As the player progresses, more effects are used on the photo to make the exercise more difficult.

Do you have a clue? Do you enjoy a good mystery? Come on over to Fripple Place and solve the case of the missing Fripples. The building has nine rooms. Some rooms have clues printed inside. Some Fripples display clues when the cursor passes over them. From these clues, the player must deduce where each Fripple lives. As he progresses, fewer clues will be provided. Hints are available by clicking on the icon. The higher levels are very challenging!

The last activity is Half Time. Just in time for Super Bowl Sunday, you can design your very own half-time show. Players learn logic, analytical and programming skills using a visual programming language to choreograph a half-time show. The coach button activates a video demonstration of each button function. "Ideas" are available again for

inspiration and modification. To make a show, the player chooses from three sets of characters of three each. He can put almost any number of characters on the football field. Each character type will be programmed to do the same activities. At the bottom of the screen are the programming icons. Below that are the three programming lines, one for each character type. Programming is done by dragging programming icons to the lines. Among the instructions are walk straight, turn left, turn right, paint, mop, start loop and end loop. The "ideas" section contains some amazing shows that will delight and inspire all.

Featuring vibrant colors and enchanting characters, TT3 is graphically pleasing. The animation is very good. The sound portion of the program is excellent also. Voice characterizations are performed with enthusiasm and professionalism. The sound effects are very lifelike and the music is varied and interesting.

TT3 uses a point-and-click interface. Maneuvering through the program is very easy. Audible help is available in most activities. The program manual is very thorough including an extensive troubleshooting guide. TT3 also includes a multimedia parent's guide which includes information about the learning opportunities available in the program and advises parents on how to best assist their children in the learning process.

Previous installments of Thinkin' Things have been great fun and TT3 is no exception. The activities are quite varied and intriguing. The creative opportunities in this package should encourage many hours of learning fun.

TT3 has outstanding educational value. Rather than teaching children facts, it teaches them to think in several different ways. It encourages creative thought in Carving BLOX and Half Time. It promotes deductive reasoning in Fripple Place. Logic and analytical thinking are expanded in Stocktopus and Photo Twister. Logic and programming skills are learned in Half Time. Problem-solving is the most important skill to have for success in tomorrow's work place and TT3 develops this skill well.

Retailing for approximately $40, TT3 is a great value. It provides an unequaled combination of entertainment and educational value backed by a 30-day moneyback guarantee. Edmark has provided another first-class product for the educational software market.

Ratings

Graphics 9.5
Sound 9.5
Interface 9.5
Play Value 9.0
Educational Value . . . 10.0
Bang for the Buck . . . 9.5
Average 9.5

Scholastic's The Magic School Bus
Explores the Ocean
Ages 6-10
Retail price: $49.95 to consumers
$44.95 to educators
Microsoft

Program Requirements

CPU: 486SX/25
RAM: 4 MB
OS: Windows 3.1
Video: 640 x 480, 256 colors
HDISK: 5 MB
CD-ROM: Double-speed
Misc.: mouse, sound card (16-bit card recommended)

By Angelo Marasco

If ever there was a painless way to learn, it seems like Scholastic has found it with its delightful PBS television series "The Magic School Bus." Now Microsoft has captured that magic, put it on CD and markets it for children to enjoy at home and school. The latest addition to the Magic School Bus series is "The Magic School Bus Explores the Ocean."

I was immediately impressed by the quality of the graphics. They are bright, colorful and nearly three-dimensional in their quality. Although it took a while to load some scenes, the wait was well worth it. Once you enter a scene, whether it is on the school bus or outside, you can scan left and right. There was little delay when scanning and the scenes moved when the characters were in action. I'm used to having to deal with delays and blips when using my 486 to run graphics heavy programs. Somehow, Microsoft nearly eliminated these delays.

You go through this ocean adventure with the children of the Magic School Bus show and their teacher, Ms. Frizzle, also known as "the Friz." The Friz is always coaxing you on to find out more. "Liz" the lizard is also available. Click on her and you are given help.

There are three main "sets" where the action in this program plays out. The first is outside the bus, mostly in the ocean, but also on the beach in the opening. The second is the front of the bus. The third is the back of the bus. I'll cover each of these sets separately.

There is no particular order that you are forced to follow. While there is a story line that is meant to keep you moving in a logical manner, you are allowed to wander through the entire program if you choose. I like being able to go about things at my own pace, wandering wherever my mouse takes me.

Let's start with the front of the bus. To get there you first must make your own "diver's license." Here you enter your name and age. Then you put together a wacky picture by selecting from the available facial parts. Save your diver's license and you're ready to enter the bus.

One feature I really like about this program is the fact that nearly every item in the bus is clickable. While not every item that appears in the bus functions as a learning tool, it helped add interest to see action with nearly every click. Click on a valve and it turns and squeaks. Click on a switch and it turns the lights on and off. Click on the horn and it beeps in one of many variations. Kids love this kind of interactive fun. However, the real gems are what I call the "learning tools." These are clickable items that come to life when clicked. They teach something about the ocean using visual or aural techniques.

From the front of the bus you can navigate around the ocean, choosing which of the seven ocean zones you would like to visit. There is a periscope which allows you to look above the surface of the water. In one zone the periscope is used to identify whales as they breach the surface. There is a printer which produces a printout with four fun ocean facts for each zone you visit. Click on a picture on the printout and "Clem the clam" tells you the fun fact associated with the picture. Click on Clem himself and he'll make a funny remark. Clicking on the speaker produces a picture screen where you can select any marine animal and hear the sound it makes. Also available is a "satellite locator" which shows you where you are on a map of the world.

Above the driver's seat is a video monitor which shows the back of the bus. Click on it and you move into the back section of the bus. In the back of the bus you find lots more interactive goodies. The Friz can be found sitting in front of

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a science project which pertains to the ocean zone you are in. Clicking on the project allows you to operate it. Here you will learn about the effects of the shoreline and the wind on the size of waves, or the ideal conditions are for growing kelp, or how light and food supply affects the makeup of the fish living at different depths. This is just a sampling of the science projects.

On the left side of the bus are "discovery drawers." One drawer allows you to change your diver's license picture. Another lets you look at the "fish cards" you have accumulated by winning in the interactive games. Another takes you to an area where you can dress up Phoebe or Carlos in the proper underwater equipment and other costumes.

On the right side of the bus are the class reports on the ocean zones. The class reports are multimedia presentations on different topics related to the various zones. I was a little disappointed by the fact that there is nothing to indicate that more than one report is available for each zone. I found this out by accident when I left a report accidentally and went back to the class reports only to find a different report on the same zone. The reports were very interesting and informative. This is where you'll learn the most information about the ocean zone you are in.

You can take a dive into the ocean from the front or rear of the bus. Let's take a quick look at what is outside. Three of the children will take the dive into the ocean with you. Click on one child and then he or she will tell you an interesting fact. The divers will follow the arrow when you click on something. Click on any of the creatures in the scene and the divers will usually tell you something about that creature. Usually the creature will also move or take some action if it was not already swimming about.

One confusing problem seemed to crop up in most ocean scenes. If you click on a moving fish, sometimes the fish will move past the divers and they will be looking at an empty space while talking about the fish you clicked on. Even worse, sometimes the divers will be looking at another fish while talking about the fish you clicked. This was very confusing. There were times that I had no idea what the divers were talking about. Despite this minor problem, you will learn some very interesting things about living and nonliving things in the ocean zones.

In every ocean zone and inside the bus, games are available. I didn't see any educational value in the games, but children do not learn very well when facts are being pounded into them relentlessly. Therefore, I can understand the presence of the games in this program. The color and detail in some games were dazzling. I was really impressed with the graphics throughout this program.

Overall, I was really impressed with the quality of this program. The graphics were of the highest quality with an almost three-dimensional effect. The pictures were sharp with very little evidence of jagged edges. I felt that this rated a very high score for graphics.

Sounds were also of high quality and were very believable, in most cases. The sounds activated when choosing features for the face on the diver's license were strange. Otherwise, the sounds were great. One of my favorites was made when clicking on the three levers on a tank in the back of the bus. The sound was of water being evacuated from an air tank. It was so real! The music the program plays is pleasant. All of this adds up to an excellent sounds score.

The interface was a little confusing at first. Genius that I am (that's a joke!), I had trouble navigating through the program at first. I don't like to read instruction manuals before doing reviews. I feel that I can give you a better idea of the quality of the interface if I have to figure things out on my own. After all, whose kids will take enough time to read the instructions before trying out that flashy new program mom and dad bought for the computer? In this case, I nearly had to refer to the manual because I couldn't figure out how to get around. There are no menus or help icons or buttons anywhere. You must click on items in the scenes to get around or get help. After using the program a couple of times, I got the hang of it.

I didn't hit Microsoft too hard for this confusion because I feel that innovation in computer programs is important. This seemed to me to be an innovative way of interacting with the program, although it was confusing at first. Plus, the beautiful scenery is not marred by ugly menus and icons.

This program has a high play value. I enjoyed it immensely. There is enough to do in this program that it will keep kids busy for hours. The program is full of surprises. It seemed like every time I ran the program I was finding some new

secret hidden away somewhere.

The program took a little bit of a hit on educational value. While there is no doubt that The Magic School Bus Explores the Ocean is educational in nature, I was a little concerned with the nagging feeling I kept getting that there could be more. I just couldn't shake the feeling that there was more to learn and that I wasn't going to learn it here. The program seemed to breeze over the subjects just a little too much. The games had very little educational value to them. Maybe Microsoft feels that children in the six to ten age range can't handle any more information than they offer here. I give children the benefit of the doubt and feel they can absorb much more than we give them credit for.

At $49.95 for this CD, bang for the buck took a small hit. I feel that high software prices keep a lot of working families out of the market. $49.95 is a lot of money to pay for a program that doesn't really live up to its full potential for providing information to the children who will be using it. It would be nice to see this program selling somewhere in the $30 to $35 range. Still, I can't say that anyone who pays $49.95 is getting cheated. This is really a good program, even if it doesn't fully flex its muscles.

Being from Microsoft, I was expecting a quality piece of software. The Magic School Bus Explores the Ocean did not disappoint me. Parents will have just as much fun using this program as the little ones will. I can definitely recommend adding this CD to your educational software collection.

Ratings

Graphics 10.0
Sound 10.0
Interface 9.0
Play Value 10.0
Educational Value . . . 8.5
Bang for the Buck . . . 8.5
Average 9.33

FREE SOFTWARE

I have two software packages, and I will give away one each to two lucky readers. The packages are Muppet Reading & Phonics and Muppet Reading & Phonics II. Both programs require on IBM compatibles: a minimum 386 CPU, Windows 3.1 or greater, 4 MB RAM and a CD-ROM drive; for Macintosh: 256 colors, System 7, 4MB RAM and a CD-ROM drive. Each sells for around $25.

Here are the rules:

1. Send an e-mail to me at this address – fsereno@matrix.uti.com
2. In the body of the letter, simply write Muppet Contest Entry and include your real name. I will send an e-mail to acknowledge all received entries.
3. If you do not have access to Internet e-mail, entries can be mailed to Frank Sereno, 528 West Ave., Morris, IL 60450 Entries via U.S. Mail will NOT receive an acknowledgment due to Postal efficiency and my poor bank account.
4. All entries must be dated by 11:59 p.m. on January 31, 1996
5. Only one entry per household, please
6. Employees or staff of STR Publishing, American Education Publishing and Tebay Communications are not eligible
7. The first name chosen will receive his choice of the programs and second name will get the remaining program
8. Taxes, if any, will be the responsibility of the winners. Shipping will be paid by STR Publishing (ME!)
9. Winners will be notified by e-mail or regular mail and will also be announced in this column

If you have sent e-mail to the matrix.uti.com address and have not received an acknowledgment, you can also send e-mail to me at frank.sereno@bbs.uti.com or you can fax me at 815-942-4469.

I would like to thank American Education Publishing, Brighter Child Software and Tebay Communications for providing the software for this contest. Both programs were reviewed in 1995 and received good marks. The software is very easy for younger children to run and is very entertaining. Children of all ages love the Muppets!
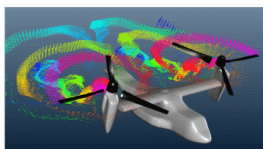
PORTABLE COMPUTERS SECTION
Marty Mankins, Editor

Special Notice!! STR Infofile   File format REQUIREMENTS FOR ARTICLES

FILE FORMAT FOR STREPORT

All articles submitted to STReport for publication must be sent in the following format. Please use the format requested. Any files received that do not conform will not be used. The article must be in an importable word processor format for Word 7.0.... The margins are .05" left and 1.0" Monospaced fonts are not to be used. Please use proportional fonting only and at eleven points.

- No Indenting on any paragraphs!!
- No underlining!
- Column Format shall be achieved through the use of tabs only. Do NOT use the space bar.
- No ASCII "ART"!!
- There is no limits as to size, articles may be split into two if lengthy
- Actual Artwork should be in GIF, PCX, JPG, TIF, BMP, WMF file formats
- Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.)should be sent along with the article separately
- Please use a single font only in an article. TTF CG Times 11pt. is preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call.

On another note... the ASCII version of STReport is fast approaching the "end of the line" As the major Online Services move away from ASCII.... So shall STReport. All in the name of progress and improved readability. The amount of reader mail expressing a preference for our Adobe PDF enhanced issue is running approximately 15 to 1 over the ASCII edition. Besides, STReport will not be caught in the old, worn out "downward compatibility dodge" we must move forward.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation.

Ralph F. Mariano, Editor
STReport International Online Magazine

Dedicated to the Memory of
Norm Weinress...

a truly fine ATARIAN and one heck of a pie thrower.
Norm Weinress (NORMW) last on Delphi at 15-JAN-1996 01:25:56

From the Delphi Atari Advantage forum comes this news of the passing of Norm Weinress, a longtime Atari user and online friend to many. Although the notes below are quite personal and deal with some of the medical problems that Norm had been dealing with up until his passing, we have included them intact. If you knew Norm, you'd understand that talking about his afflictions made life a bit more bearable for him. We also know that Norm wouldn't mind...

Long time Atari user and DELPHI member Norm Weinress (NORMW) passed away last Friday. I'm not sure of the exact causes, but I believe it was related to his battle with diabetes. His comments here in the Atari SIG were a regular source of a smile for me, and I'll miss them.

Wherever you are, Norm, here's a big gooey pizza, comin' at ya!   SPLAT!!!

-Gordie Meyer, Atari Advantage SysOp

From: John Tarpinian
Subject: Friend's of Norm Weinress

Just thought I've give all of you an update on Norm. He had his surgery on Tuesday. The doctor removed his other foot and the middle finger of his right hand. As was with his last surgery his heart stopped due to an allergic reaction to medications. His is still in ICU and may have to have all the fingers on his right hand removed, too. His had been given anti-depressants for some time but that was stopped after the surgery and is now depressed, too. That is understandable.

Subject: Norm's Passing
Shortly after I sent Email regarding Norm's condition I received a phone call from his partner Tony telling me that Norm passed away last night. Please pass the word to the Atari community that knew of him. I am sending this message from John as per above request. I have known Norm for many years and he will be missed.

We have been receiving some feedback regarding one of my editorials a few weeks back soliciting articles from the Atari Internet community. The response has been quite uplifting and I will be contacting people in the weeks to come. We're hoping that the Atari computing section of STReport will once again contain more interesting and informative original articles as has been our tradition over the years. The old workhorses aren't dead yet!

Other than that bit of news, things have started to quiet down after last week's barrage of news and speculation pertaining to Atari's alleged demise. While Atari's current path is still being reviewed, it appears that Atari is still moving forward with its plans. Obviously, Atari is going to be moving a little timidly while the company takes a reality check. As we learn more, we'll pass the news on. I'll also have more to say about this matter a little later, in the Jaguar section.

Until next time…

JAGUAR SECTION

Battlesphere! id Fights Back!
Atari, R.I.P.? CatNips!
Highlander & I-War Reviews!
And more….

FROM THE EDITOR'S CONTROLLER - PLAYIN' IT LIKE IT IS!

While things at Atari are still up in the air, speculation and rumors are still running rampant online and on the Internet. I have to admit that I am concerned about the recent events occurring in Sunnyvale. I don't see organizations such as MMWire and Variety as the type to manufacture stories. The stories could be 100% true. They could also be stories that developed by reading "between the lines" after hearing from various people either at Atari or those recently let go. Atari denies much of what has appeared in the press, but that doesn't mean the stories are false. It doesn't make them true, either.

It's a difficult situation to really gauge and come away with any concrete opinion. I think it's going to be a few weeks before we learn what's going to be really happening at Atari. At the moment, I've resigned myself to a wait and see attitude; but I have to admit that I'm not overly optimistic. There are going to have to be some things that are going to give, based on current staffing and financial restraints that these recent layoffs have caused. How this affects the Jaguar and future developments remains to be seen.

However, after talking with various folks at Atari this past week, it appears that the mood in Sunnyvale has "improved" somewhat. Current Jaguar projects are still being continued; future ones are being re-evaluated. Even Atari's recent entry into the PC-gaming areas are being reconsidered. It appears that Atari is re-evaluating itself, both its current situation and its immediate future. From what I can gather, Atari is still moving forward, albeit timidly for the present.

Since Atari has let its PR firm go for the moment, I've been talking directly to Atari's marketing department to check on the status of some current and pending titles for review. I've been assured that these games will be making their way to us very shortly, for review. With any layoff comes confusion as to who will now be handling what; I've been told that those details that are affecting us have almost been ironed out and will once again start to begin anew.

No matter what has happened, or might happen.. the "show" must go on as usual, or so I'm told! And that's what we're doing here at STReport. This week's issue contains some interesting and informative news, opinions, and reviews. We'll take a look at a sampling of online reactions to the recent events at Atari, a Battlesphere update, reviews of Highlander and I-War, and even a new CatNips from Atari's Don Thomas. We've got a great issue this week so we hope that you enjoy the reading! Stay tuned for future developments, as they happen.

Until next time…

JAGUAR CATALOG STR INFOFILE - WHAT'S CURRENTLY AVAILABLE, WHAT'S COMING OUT.

Current Available Titles

CAT #	TITLE	MSRP	DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER
J9000	Cybermorph	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9006	Evolution:Dino Dudes	$19.99	Atari Corp.

CAT #	TITLE	MSRP	DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER
J9005	Raiden	$29.99	FABTEK, Inc/Atari Corp.
J9001	Trevor McFur/		
	Crescent Galaxy	$19.99	Atari Corp.
J9010	Tempest 2000	$39.95	Llamasoft/Atari Corp.
J9028	Wolfenstein 3D	$29.95	id/Atari Corp.
JA100	Brutal Sports FootBall	$69.95	Telegames
J9008	Alien vs. Predator	$69.99	Rebellion/Atari Corp.
J9029	Doom	$69.99	id/Atari Corp.
J9036	Dragon: Bruce Lee	$29.99	Atari Corp.
J9003	Club Drive	$29.99	Atari Corp.
J9007	Checkered Flag	$19.99	Atari Corp.
J9012	Kasumi Ninja	$29.99	Atari Corp.
J9042	Zool 2	$19.99	Atari Corp
J9020	Bubsy	$19.99	Atari Corp
J9026	Iron Soldier	$29.99	Atari Corp
J9060	Val D'Isere Skiing	$39.99	Atari Corp.
	Cannon Fodder	$49.99	Virgin/C-West
	Syndicate	$69.99	Ocean
	Troy Aikman Football	$69.99	Williams
	Theme Park	$69.99	Ocean
	Sensible Soccer		Telegames
	Double Dragon V	$59.99	Williams
J9009E	Hover Strike	$39.99	Atari Corp.
J0144E	Pinball Fantasies	$59.99	C-West
J9052E	Super Burnout	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9070	White Men Can't Jump	$49.99	Atari Corp.
	Flashback	$59.99	U.S. Gold
J9078E	VidGrid (CD)		Atari Corp
J9016E	Blue Lightning (CD)	$59.99	Atari Corp
J9040	Flip-Out	$49.99	Atari Corp
J9082	Ultra Vortek	$69.99	Atari Corp
C3669T	Rayman	$69.99	Ubi Soft
Power	Drive Rally	$69.99	TWI
J9101	Pitfall	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9086E	Hover Strike CD	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9031E	Highlander I (CD)	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9061E	Ruiner Pinball	$59.99	Atari Corp.
	Dragon's Lair	$69.99	Readysoft
J9097E	Missile Command 3D	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9091E	Atari Karts	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9044E	Supercross 3D	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9106E	Fever Pitch Soccer	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9043E	I-War	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9069	Myst (CD)	$59.99	Atari Corp.
	Primal Rage	$69.99	Time Warner
	Battlemorph	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9055	Baldies	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9089	NBA Jam TE	$69.99	Atari Corp.
	Zoop	$49.99	Atari Corp.

Available Soon

CAT #	TITLE	MSRP	DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER
	Space Ace	$59.99	Readysoft
	Defender 2000	TBA	Atari Corp.

	Fight For Life	TBA	Atari Corp.
	…Mutant Penguins	$59.99	Atari Corp.
	World Tour Racing	TBA	Atari Corp
	Breakout 2000	$49.99	Atari Corp.
	Max Force	$59.99	Atari Corp.
J9021	Brett Hull Hockey	$69.99	Atari Corp.

Hardware and Peripherals

CAT #	TITLE	MSRP	MANUFACTURER
J8001	Jaguar (no cart)	$99.99	Atari Corp.
J8904	Composite Cable	$19.95	
J8901	Controller/Joypad	$24.95	Atari Corp.
J8905	S-Video Cable	$19.95	
	CatBox	$69.95	ICD
J8800	Jaguar CD-ROM	$149.99	Atari Corp.
J8908	JagLink Interface	$29.95	Atari Corp.
J8910	Team Tap		
	4-Player Adapter)	$29.95	Atari Corp.
J8907	Jaguar ProController	$29.95	Atari Corp.
J8911	Memory Track	$29.95	Atari Corp.
J8909	Tempest 2000:		
	The Soundtrack	$12.99	Atari Corp.

DOOM MAKER MOVES AGAINST COPYCATS

Game maker id Software, best known for its Doom title, is stepping up its efforts to prevent companies from offering unlicensed products based on its flagship software. The Mesquite, Texas-based company says it is moving against the publishers of Doom add-on programs as well books using "Doom" in the Title.

The firm notes that it recently won a permanent injunction against Precision Software, a British company that offered products featuring Doom characters. Additionally, id says it has received assurances of compliance -- and in some instances monetary compensation -- from a variety of other game and book publishers, including Sams Publishing, Wizardworks, Softkey International and The Waite Group.

DOOM and DOOM II were both designed with an open-ended architecture that allows users to try their hand at game design. But the company never anticipated that commercial developers and publishers would use the capability to market their own compatible products.

"Over the past few years we have seen more and more companies exploiting our success with Doom and Doom II by publishing illegal and shoddy imitations and add-on products," says id spokesman Jay Wilbur. "We are vehemently opposed to companies trading on our name and reputation and will continue to go after them legally to stop them and in turn protect our intellectual property rights."

We are currently working to re-vamp the current and pending list of Jaguar titles to reflect a more accurate portrayal of the games that are likely to make it to the public. To-date, we've included titles that have been announced as "in progress" and then rarely heard any updates. Many of our readers have asked for specific dates; or, having read the title(s) in this list, considered the games to be definite. With the recent cutbacks at Atari, there's presently no guarantees

as to what might be coming out in the near future. After talking with a few people at Atari, we've been told that a new list will be making its way to us shortly. There will be some scheduling changes as a direct result of the layoffs at Atari; and also some changes made after reviewing the current status of some of the pending software. Keep your eyes peeled to this section in the next couple of weeks for an update!

"I-WAR"

Available Now

Developed by: Imagitech Design

By Tom Sherwin

Published by: Atari
Price: $59.99

Imagine a future where the whole world is connected to a huge network, known as the I-Way. Now imagine huge databases suddenly becoming intelligent enough to start making viruses that threaten the I-Way. Now imagine who it falls upon to destroy the viruses and the rogue databases that make them. Yep… you again!

Putting aside the storyline, I-Way is quite Cybermorph-esque. Hop into your tank and travel over multiple levels, collect data pods, and destroy databases. For those of you who can remember that far back, think "TRON". You can choose from one of three tanks, each equipped with a different amount of available weaponry, shields, and speed. Of course, there's always the trade off. As you wander through the levels, you can find energy power-ups and bonus icons to add more weapons to your tank. How many weapons you can have on your tank depends on the tank you choose at the start. One thing worth noting is that when your tank needs to be replaced, you "regenerate"… meaning that you get the same tank you previously had, weapons and all, but with one less tank in reserve. A nice touch considering the paucity of weapon upgrades on each level.

Each level has multiple areas connected by transporters. There are also switches which enable/disable things like doors and rising platforms (though sometimes the switches aren't in the same "room" as the object it activates). Once you've collected all of the datapods and destroyed all of the databases of that level, you can move on to the next. Between rounds, you can play "navigate through a tunnel and collect goodies" in an attempt to earn an extra tank. Standing in your way are various enemies, ranging from relatively harmless bouncing balls, to tanks, tank-dropping planes, guard posts, and heavy tanks.

Graphics:
Almost everything is Gouraud shaded, with a small smattering of texture maps here and there. If you didn't like Cybermorph's graphics, these won't do much for you, either. Even with the texture mapping, things are pretty dull. You and your enemies are more than just cubes, but they really aren't anything that great. You can play the game from one of a few perspectives (first person, directly behind, etc.) but I'll bet that you won't change from the first person. Why? The biggest problem with the game in the frame rate. As long as you're in a simply-drawn area with nothing else going on, things are smooth. But once you introduce a few baddies and the action heats up, the frame rate drops to bad "Hover Strike" levels, making the game difficult to enjoy. And more polygons on the screen, the worse things get. Since viewing your tank from behind just makes more things to draw on the screen, the framerate drops terribly. Sometimes it makes the game difficult to play, a SERIOUS flaw, IMHO.

Sound FX/Music:
The background music is non-descript techno pop stuff, neither enhancing or detracting from the game. Sound FX are cheap and cheesy. Explosions sound flat and your "guide" voice sounds like it came from speech synthesizers made in the late 70's. There's no noise when you hit a wall, drop down a level, or even when you move. Clearly,

adding sounds to this game was an afterthought.

Control:
You can select your A/B/C button layout at the start. Everything controls well UNTIL the frame rate drops. Such a poor frame rate makes it very difficult to aim at anything, giving the computer that "cheat" it always seems to have.

Manual:
Tells you the basics, but spends most of the pages showing you the enemies. Maybe this is a nitpick, but it really isn't necessary. Since you don't have any "friends" in the game, all you need to know is that if it isn't a power-up or goodie, shoot it.

Entertainment:
If you're the kind of gamer who needs glitz as soon as the game goes in, you'll be left quite wanting. Even if you're willing to give the game a chance, you may still find it missing something. That's not to say that it's a TERRIBLE game, but we already got the same kind of thing as our pack-in (for those of us who got it): Cybermorph. That was done at least three years ago and I-War shows little signs of improvement. Thankfully, you can save your game after each completed level, but there really isn't a heck of a lot to bring you back for more. More blasting, more transporting, more collecting.

Graphics:	5
Sound FX/Music:	4
Control:	8/4 (high/low framerate)
Manual:	7
Entertainment:	5
Reviewer's Overall:	5.5

I-War isn't HORRIBLE, and it probably would have seemed better if it came
out two years ago. But Jag games are improving as of late and this seems to be a throwback to the days when just a few polygons were enough to make us go "wow". There's nothing very innovative about the game and the falling framerate is a BIG disappointment. Except for the most rabid Cybermorph fans, I'd have a tough time recommending this one. Borrow it from a friend or wait until someone has a clearance sale.

JAGUAR GAME TITLE STR REVIEW - "HIGHLANDER: THE LAST OF THE MACLEODS"

HIGHLANDER

Available Now

By Craig Harris

Published by: Atari Corp. Price: $59.99

Before I begin, I have a confession to make: I've never seen a single film in the Highlander series. I've never stayed up late to watch the syndicated TV version and I'm never home to see the cartoon on the USA Network. In fact, I've never seen a Christopher Lambert movie before "Mortal Kombat."

I admit it, the game might have been in better hands with one of those drooling Highlander fan-boys. They would have appreciated the plot and atmosphere more than I could ever have. But it's a game, dammit - I'm a gamer. I'm unbiased, unfinicky…I don't care if a game stars little blue men living in mushrooms. It's here for me to play, I'm here to play. With that said, be prepared for an enjoyable (but blatantly flawed) role-playing game from Atari.

/// The Plot

The Highlander series follows a race of immortals. Each of these immortals, vying to be "the only one," spent their entire existence running around lopping each others' heads off (apparently the only way to kill an immortal). In "Last of the Macleods," an oath has been formed between the immortals. Each has decided to dedicate their lives gathering all the knowledge necessary to allow the fading mortals to rebuild their society. They became the Jettators.

However, one immortal chose not to take the vow. Kortan decided that this was the wimp's way out and declared himself the last immortal. Connor Macleod, another immortal, did not allow this announcement to go unchallenged. However, since he was a Jettator, Connor could not win this challenge. Connor was booted out of the land by Kortan's army, allowing Kortan to continue his evil rein over the land.

The Jettators decided that this challenge could be carried out by another immortal, one unbounded by the Oath. They await the birth of an immortal who, when old enough to wield a sword, will inherit the Jettators knowledge and carry out the challenge, and finally defeat Kortan.

Enter Character…

You are Quentin Dundee. As the game opens, your village is ransacked, looted and pillaged by Kortan's army, and the residents are taken prisoner. You suffer a fatal wound during this attack. While lying lifeless on the dusty ground, a miracle of sorts occurs: you awaken. In her last breaths, your mother explains that you are an immortal named Macleod adopted into the Dundee clan. She tells you of a man you must meet to save the Dundees and complete your ultimate destiny…

/// Gameplay

If you've ever played any of the games in the Alone in the Dark series, then you'll feel right at home with Highlander. You control a polygonconstructed Quentin Macleod in a continuously shifting third-person perspective. Quentin can be moved, within limits, anywhere in this world while the camera constantly shifts to give a better view of your persona.

Quentin can run, jump, punch and kick. Once the coveted Highlander sword is found, you can also dodge, parry, thrust and block. Control is on the tricky side, with the pad doing triple duty at times. A normal button push will do one motion, while up and a button does another, and still a double tap and a button provides another. If you've got a ProController (the new 6 button pad), life got 3 times easier.

If an item can be picked up, walking over it will offer four choices:

Pick up, examine, use, or drop. You can also bring up this menu by hitting the Option button. Items that can be picked up are easily spotted: every item manipulated is constructed in polygons; everything else is SGI rendered. When you use an item, you're treated to a short, rendered scene of that item falling into place. Don't even *think* about booting this game without a Memory Track in the cartridge slot. If you don't own one, it's worth the $30 to save your game as well as your sanity: it is humanly impossible to beat Highlander in one sitting. To bring up the Load/Save screen, pause the game and hit button C. 5 separate games can be saved on one Memory Track cartridge.

/// Graphics

As stated above, Quentin is constructed of polygons. In fact, all humanoid characters are. The benefit to this technique is smooth, lifelike, versatile animation. Actors/acrobats were motion-captured in a studio. These motions are then mapped to the character's skeletal construction. The downside: characters lack detail, having a "pasted on" look to the more-realistic, and motionless backgrounds. Backgrounds are brilliantly rendered in still, hi-res and hi-color pictures. The developers did a bang-up job rendering 3D worlds on high-end computers, then taking stills from prime locations to provide the shifting camera angles.

To prevent the character from walking in an area he shouldn't, the game engine utilizes "invisible walls." Unfortunately, places that look accessible sometimes aren't, and your character is left walking in place. I've actually found a bug where Quentin could step over the bounds of the invisible walls, but couldn't get back. Lesson learned: save often. Plot segues are provided by relevant clips from Gaumont Productions' "Highlander: The Animated Series." These animated sequences are chock-full of sub-standard production values, yet provide informative hints that nudge you on

your way. And if the developers couldn't find a specific animation clip to provide, they rendered their own. Case in point: The death sequence, since Quentin never dies in the animated series.

/// Sound

One would assume that having CD media would be excuse enough to provide mind-blowing music. With Highlander, however, one would be wrong. Every scene has a looping, 3 second sample accompanying the action, or lack-thereof. While that looping sample is appropriate for scenes with a solitary atmosphere, like blowing wind in a canyon or dripping water in a sewer; that looping sample can get quite annoying as a 3 second music riff. I've known many a man who've gone completely mad walking around in an abandoned hut.

Sound effects are minimal, but effective. The standard "Urg's" and "Oof's" provide the violent sounds of fist and sword contact, and each character has their own scream of pain when they kick the bucket. Not that the sounds lack a special touch; Quentin's footsteps are effected differently on different terrain. They "tap-tap" on metal, or "thud-thud" on the desert floor.

/// Other Elements

The "load/save game" option, a pain to bring up in the first place, has one of the worst interfaces I've ever had to use. One, it's extremely easy to mistake "Save" for "Load," offering the opportunity to mistakenly save over a precious file. Two, the game never prompts you when you're about to overwrite a saved file. Three, it never tells you which file was the last file saved; you cannot name a save file, and there's no indication of which file is the file you want, other than "File 1," "File 2," etc. Also, even though a Save file stores your inventory, health points, and body count accurately, it refuses to remember if you had a weapon at the ready - every time you load a saved game, you have to equip a weapon. Annoying.

Speaking of saving your game, I stated above that a Memory Track is required to do so. It would have been extremely nice for the developers to design a password generator for those who have not yet purchased a save cart. As it stands, when you pick up Highlander from your local Babbage's, pick up a Memory Track too. You'll need it. The control itself takes much patience - I've clocked over 25 hours on the game, and I still can't get some of the combinations down. Plus the fact that Quentin sometimes stops when you want him to move, jumps when you want him to stab, etc. A few more days in the control tweaking department would have done wonders.

The game is laid out with "milestones" of sort; you'll know when you cross one when the music fades out after leaving a scene. Apparently the Jaguar's memory needs to be dumped and refreshed at this point. Unfortunately, the system doesn't remember what position you were facing when you walk from one area to the next. For example, in the village, if you enter a hut and notice that two guards are about to jump you, chances are you'll back out. When the village scene reloads, Quentin will be facing away from the hut. And, if you are still holding down at this point, Quentin will walk right back into the hut. While it's nice to have the option, I have yet to find a way to successfully block a swing. I find that a few forward thrusts will kill any enemy easily anyway…

/// All-in-all…

I know I'm not alone. I know there are those out there who could care less about the Highlander license, those who sneer when picking up the video off the shelf at Blockbuster, those who promptly change the channel when the TV show airs. To these people I say this: Don't judge this game by name alone - You'll be missing a great, and probably the only, Jaguar role-playing game. The same goes for everyone else - if you have a Jaguar CD, it's worth your time to give Highlander a shot.

Ratings -

Graphics	8.5	(Brilliantly rendered backgrounds, character's pasted-on look brings the ratings down a shade.)
Sound	5.0	(Annoying background music, not much sound otherwise)
Control	7.0	(Complicated layout, too loose. Lots of options, though. The Load/Save game option screen needs a new layout)
Manual	8.0	(The only instructions needed, Control Layout, is provided quite well)
Fun Factor	8.5	(Puzzles are a little on the easy side up-front, but become significantly more difficult as the quest continues. Sword play could have used a little more tweaking; it's extremely easy to find a pattern that works)

Overall   8.0   (The only RPG for the Jaguar, the first (and probably last) in the Jaguar's Highlander series. Good first effort.)

BATTLESPHERE™UPDATE 1/20/1996

The latest and greatest additions to BattleSphere(tm) are finished. This past week the following amazing milestones have been achieved:

1) New Ship Selector is in the game! Yay! All the stats for all the ships play out right before your very eyes. Choosing just the right balance of 10 parameters for your personal ship is no longer a guessing game.
2) Friend/Foe HUD designators are in there! Yahoo! Now you can tell at a glance if the ship at the edge of visible range is on your team or not!
3) Ship ID HUD designators are there as well! Whoopee! Now you can tell ships apart without even being in visual range!!!
4) Weapons Select HUD icons are up and running!! Yehaa! Now you can see the weapons available, and their shots remaining!
5) Ship Class HUD indicators are functioning! Yahoo! You can tell at a glance if you're attacking a fighter or a bomber or a super-ship. No more guesswork. Attack prey that presents the greatest strategic threat. Now it's easy to see the ship types from beyond visual range.
6) New Target select mode added. Hooray! Now you can target the closest attacking ship with the press of a button, even if he's not on your main screen. The targeting computer picks out the nearest attacker and selects him as the target!
7) Hull integrity indicator is visible! Wow! Now you can see how badly you've been damaged, and plot your strategy based on this info. Comes in handy and makes a great gift!
8) New Play Mode added: Play "Survival" against 15 enemy fighters… ALL GUNNING FOR YOU! Hooray! See how many you can take out against overwhelming enemy forces, before they get you!!!! All alone among the stars… (and you thought Level 64 in Tempest 2000 was difficult).
9) Menu code is running! Yippee! It's not in the game yet, but it's coded up and running standalone. It looks really slick. It's even cooler than our 4Play intro! Just finished this sucker tonight… whew!
10) Modem Code not complete! DOH! We're working on it, please be patient. CatNet seems to be working well, in the meantime…

Until Next Time…
        The struggle continues.

                        _____
                        \hunderbird

Okay,
The rumors of the impending demise of the "Atari Empire" has made me think of various aspects of AtariGamedom. But first, a message from the internet:

Well, nothing like a crisis to bring out one's true feelings, eh? With the resurgent rumors of Atari's demise which have followed Ted's departure I find myself asking "What will I do if Atari really DOES abandon video games?"

Let's face it: I'm a video game junky. I chose Atari for my game system of choice for two primary reasons:

1) I like the sense of community which pervades the Atari crowd. Do people on other systems get regular updates about coming games from the likes of Scott, Doug, Jeff and Adisak? No. For some reason (perhaps its underdog nature)

Atari attracts people who are not only small developers I can empathize with but who are clever, close and whom I consider almost to be friends from their posts here.

2) I love the games. There's something, maybe it's the "eurotrash" nature of the small development teams, which has provided a very unique flavor to the Atari library. No mess of corporately created homogeneous fighters shooters and drivers this. No other system has the adrenal pumping of AvP or T2K or the off-the-wall weirdness of games like Baldies, Flip-Out or AMP. And where else is there a game with the immersive style and def of gameplay of Battlemorph? I've always maintained that Jaguar was head and shoulders above the rest of the crowd game-wise, and the thought o no longer having more of these strange titles coming out frightens me.

Where else can I find this mishmash of close-knit garage type developers? Playstation? Don't make me laugh. If ever there was a more entrenched bunch of "please all" committee created games then I don't remember it. Saturn? No, they too are driven more by serving up homogeneous crowd-pleasers than producing anything revolutionary. U64? Even though it's not out yet this one scares me the most. I never liked the soft-feeling "safe for kids" type of game, and that seems to be virtually all that's coming to the U64. I mean Ultra Mario? Kirby Bowl? Kiddie stuff! Ugh!
I suppose if Atari disappears for whatever reason I'll have to pray that some strange stuff comes out for the Matsushita M2. I mean, those 3DO guys, they'll publish ANYTHING!

But I'll miss the jaguar community. I'll miss Doug's constant flaming of Martin Lehous. I'll miss Adisak's updates about his latest lightning-speed programming. I'll miss the god-like Jeff and his strange yakly sense of humor. And I'll miss the many Atari fans I've become used to hearing from every day. Kraig, Karl, Brian, Travis (who's been gone for ages anyhow), Scott (the other one), Sven, Sal, Dana and all the others. I'll miss you if Atari is gone. I think we all agree that there's never been a more wild ride. Jaguar forever.

But in the mean time there's still 14 games out today that I don't own. And I still hold out some hope that I'll one day be able to buy a couple copies of Battlesphere for networking. And there'll be Defender 2000. And hopefully Phase Zero. And I still have a collection of many of the greatest and most innovative video games ever created.

-Silverblade the Grey Wanderer

And now, my thoughts….

1. If indeed this is the end of Atari (we still don't know), it is a sad day for anyone who's ever played a video game or toyed with a computer. Atari, our founding father, without whom much of the video game innovations might not have taken place, has been relegated to more-or-less a "has-been" in the race for video game supremacy. HOWEVER, we cannot forget our history.

2. I am sick and tired of "I told you so" and "Ha ha ha" comments that are prevalent in this forum and on the internet. What's so funny? What's to be proud of? That you were right? It's a waste of bandwidth, if you ask me. Even though the current Atari may not be the Atari of old, please show a little respect and save the "I told you so's" for another time. There's no need to kick a fallen hero. I personally would like to tip my hat to the best there ever was and look ahead to the wonderful legacy that Atari Inc. and Atari Corp. has bestowed upon gamers and companies alike. Those who wish to sneer in the faces of others' lost investments, jobs and purchases are just crows who feed off the carrion of the dead and have _absolutely_ no redeeming qualities whatsoever…..

3. Much of the blame for Atari's demise has been focused on the incompetence of the Tramiels. That just isn't the case. Yes, an argument can be made that the 7800 should have been released earlier. The Lynx "should" have been better supported in light of the technical superiority it possessed over the Game Gear and the B/W Gameboy. Broken promises and chronically late releases certainly didn't help as well.

4. HOWEVER, the Tramiels did not start the fire. The blame should be placed on Warner Atari. ET, Raiders of the Lost Ark, Demons to Diamonds and countless other duds were responsible for the crash. The Tramiels, in a way, inherited a sinking ship that would certainly have been either reduced to a token "tributary of Warner Communications" or wiped-out altogether. Say what you may about sir Jack -- although Atari didn't exactly thrive under his rein, he nonetheless captained a company that very well may have perished a long time ago….

5. Finally, for those who curse Atari for not taking advantage of its opportunity when it first debuted, give me a break! Nobody in their right mind believed that Atari could dominate the industry as it had done in the past. The Jaguar was released at a time when the SNES and Genesis was at their peak in terms of popularity. It would've taken a stroke of genius to pull of the unthinkable. Although missed deadlines and broken promises greatly harmed their chances, I do not regret my purchase of the unit 'till this day. The Playstation and Saturn are merely clones of each other. In other words, they are platforms for top-notch 3D fighters, shooters and driving games. To get one would be the same as getting its counterpart. In this regard, the Jaguar was a great second (or niche) machine. For those who purchased the Jag as their main entertainment device, all I can say is you should have hung onto your SNES or Genesis for your dinner, and enjoyed your Jag for dessert.

6. PLEASE let us have our Breakout 2000, D2K, Battlesphere and Phase Zero. Whatever becomes of Atari, they would have at least existed with the titles that are finally worthy of being fit for the Jaguar…Thanks for reading, and my apologies for any grammatical or spelling errors (it's early in the morning here)

Keita Iida

CATNIPS… JAGUAR TIDBITS FROM DON THOMAS   (96.01.21)

"What's up?" you ask?"

I admit it. My world has been turned upside down recently. So many things
have changed so fast, I don't know which way is up anymore. I'm not even sure how many of you have heard about all the things going on, but I do appreciate the hundreds of notes of concern which have suddenly clogged my E-Mail boxes on Prodigy, GEnie and CompuServe… not to mention CATscan and the old fashioned telephone system.

Is it true?
Are you safe?
What about these changes I'm hearing?
What's going on?
Tell us what is happening.

Okay, okay. I get the point. You've heard things, and you're concerned. I'll share with you what I know…

On Monday, January 15, early in the morning, I get a phone call. It's my hearing aid dispenser at Price/Costco. He tells me my hearing aid has arrived. The problem is he is located near Sacramento and I had counted on it being available a week or so earlier. The All-Star Soccer season has started, and my Saturdays are tied up. I tell him I'll have to get with him later because of "changed" priorities in my life.

On Tuesday, January 16, afternoon, my wife calls me and tells me we need to reschedule our anniversary vacation in February. February 14 is our 10th Anniversary (thank you <g>) and we hoped to get away. But alas, our professional obligations "change" previous plans.

On Wednesday, January 17, evening, I manage to break away from the office in time to see "Phantom of the Opera" at the Curran Theatre in San Francisco. My wife was in the city doing business and we agreed to meet there to see the show. The show was wonderful and I endorse it to everyone, but it did cause "changes" in the day which made it feel rushed and stressful.

On Thursday, January 18, I thought it might be a great night to play Jaguar and catch up on-line activities, but Kyle's soccer coach called and asked us to help with the snack bar on Saturday. For an hour, I played phone tag between my wife (still out of town) and the coach. My hopes to play a game of "Zoop" or two "changed".

On Friday, January 19, I get stuck in gobs of weekend traffic while trying to get home from work. Our 27" color TV goes on the fritz. My wife says I have to clean the bathroom over the weekend, and we have to get to sleep early so we can get up early for Kyle's first game in the morning. All my hopes for a quiet evening "change" again.

On Saturday, January 20, my son's team ties both Soccer games and we manage to make a last minute appointment to take delivery on my hearing aid after all. Realizing I have to go through the rest of my life with this electronics component installed in my head "changes" the reality as I have grown accustomed to.

On Sunday, January 21, my wife talks the family into seeing "Mr. Holland's Opus". I expected a boring, emotional movie. I was half right. It was emotional, but not at all boring. Wow! Movies like this can "change" your perspective in life. For me, it has certainly been a week of traveling, adapting and "change". The good news is that the Jaguar was still there when I needed her. She purrs so quietly with tamed power and she never let me down whenever I found a few minutes to take a quick break. Of all the change in my life over the last week or so, the ONLY change I experienced with my Atari Jaguar is that I finally found time to play "Zoop" and "NBA JAM - Tournament Edition".

Oh yeah, Atari's Ted Hoff resigned. Atari laid off a few during a week which hit AT&T, Apple and others pretty hard too. The news caused some people to think we're going out of business… again. But what's new? <g>
I don't mean to trivialize these types of "changes", but when it comes to people jumping to conclusions and misinformation being sensationalized, some things never change. Do they?

Battlemorph pleases people on the Internet…
This response submitted by kipp@fh-heilbronn.de on 1/16/96.

Battlemorph is at last showing what the Jag can do. Lots of gameplay, and not only collecting pods, but all different things. Fortunately, I got a memory cartridge :-). And hopefully there will be other games out soon with this quality. With Battlemorph there is no need to buy a PSX or Saturn any more :-) (I'd rather spend my money on other good games to come)

Another Battlemorph testimonial found on CATscan…
Message: = Open Discussion = #244 of 246 [9 Lines]
Sent On: January 2, 1996 at 1:10am
Sent By: Ryan Bullock
Sent To: All
Replies: 1
Subject: BattleMorph
This is a KILLER game!!! I wasn't impressed with Cybermorph, but BattleMorph is great. I don't even want to call it the "sequel" because it is so far advanced from it. All the enemies and buildings are texture mapped. All the lands are much better looking, and now you can go under water and in tunnels. There different mission objectives… not just collecting those silly pods. BattleMorph is a winner.

Ah, and so is Atari Karts… WOW, this is a good one, especially in the flawless split screen mode!

 I was also forwarded this Battlemorph praise…
This article submitted by Francois Larocque on 1/16/96.

This game is absolutely the best game I've ever played! It is so DEEP, I just love it!
I still have 5 planets to conquer and that should be it. But what I like best is the REPLAY value. You just replay it, and it seems that it is different every time. The artificial intelligence compared to Cybermorph is superior, they (the bad guys) just know where you are, and will actually try to push you in a corner to shoot you.

        --Francois Larocque

Another CATscan member touts Supercross 3D…

Message: = Open Discussion = #244 of 247 [6 Lines]
Sent On: December 31, 1995 at 7:22pm
Sent By: Gary Shaw

Sent To: All
Replies: None
Subject: Supercross 3D

I picked up SUPERCROSS 3D three days ago and I really love the game. The game doesn't have a fast frame rate (like S. BURNOUT) but it's keeping up with a lot of action around the entire track. This game is a real thrill to play and quite challenging. I raced motocross a few years back so my opinion might be somewhat biased. I am having a good time with this one! YEAH!

Here's one of hundreds of comments sent to me regarding the new "Tempest 2000 PC" demo found on CompuServe, CATscan, Atari's Web Site and throughout the world…

FROM: Jeremy W., 76740,2606
SERVICE: CompuServe DATE: 01/08/96 12:37 AM
I just tried a demo of your Tempest 2000 for the PC, and I believe you have created the best arcade for this platform to date! I work in software/video game retail (part time college student) and I've seen many games come and go…. Your Tempest 2000 is a dream to play! The sound effects and graphics are in perfect sync and reproduce that old arcade feel that I've yet to see done on a PC game as well as you have. As a software sales person I will do my part to help promote this great title….

        - Jeremy

Jeffrey Norwood tells us that the first Jaguar Journal conference of the year is going to be held on Friday night, January 26, starting at 8:30 P.M. ET (5:30 P.M. PT), in the Atari Gaming Forum on CompuServe. The Jaguar Journal is going to present the 1995 Atari Awards. I also intend to invite Frank Slater of Ubi Soft.

Mr. Butler like Fever Pitch Soccer a lot!…
From: Norman Butler <butler@netvision.net.il>
To: Multiple recipient list <jaguar@bucknell.edu>
Date: Sun, 14 Jan 1996 16:54:18 -0500
Subject: Fever Pitch Soccer: Impressions

Hi all,

I have just finished playing Fever Pitch Soccer with a friend of mine after four continuous hours. Over the years I have tried many a soccer game, including the classic Kick-off, but FPS is better. It's even better than FIFA on the PC or Sensible Soccer. I know most of you out there are from the USA where soccer is not the same force it is elsewhere in the world, but I strongly suggest that if you want some fun with the JAG then you have to get this title. The important thing to remember when playing it is that it takes a while to get used to but once you are it is really rewarding. Just make sure you read the instructions carefully.

In my opinion the graphics could be improved but the gameplay is right on.

Date : 01/14/96   Time : 23:13:29
Name : Norman Patrick Butler
E-mail: butler@netvision.net.il Norman_Butler_at_DPKO-UNIFIL@un.org 75773.2203@compuserve.com
Home : +972-4-9922856 (Facsimile & Voice) Work : +972-4-9825544 (Ext. 5387/5577/5451) Mobile: 052-417-893

As I final note for those rumor mongers…
Word has it that Spring is coming,
but don't tell anyone about the "change".
Some might think Winter is going out of business. <g>

Editor's MailBag

Messages * NOT EDITED * for content

Subject: The Revolving Door - Msg Number: 107797
From: Thomas J. Eisenmann 73322,1624
To: Ralph @ STReport 70007,4454
Forum: ATARIGAMING   Sec: 10-News/Reviews/Shows
Date: 20-Jan-96 12:54

Ralph,

I just had the pleasure of reading your editorial commentary in ST1203 reminiscing on your Jaguar and subsequent PSX purchases. For the most part, I found your commentary right on (noted exceptions to follow) and a little sad. It is a shame to see a once great innovator like Atari destruct, especially when this destruction is self-imposed. Poor management decisions (or lack there of) have killed the Jaguars chances of succeeding on many occasions. To bad.

What was once a premier hardware console has been overwhelmed by more competent systems (and companies) and the opportunity to make any impact in the gaming industry by the Jaguar, IMHO, has long since passed.

Now, to the points of exceptions:

Although it may be that I am just Doomed out, I disagree with your opinions of AvP vs PSX (or any version) Doom. Although the graphics (scrolling) are much smoother on the PSX, IMHO the texture and 'fell of the graphics in AvP have finer. Although there is no music in AvP, the ambient sound is what made the game for me. This is the only game I have ever played that 'raised' the hair on the back of my neck. I also feel the depth of AvP (gameplay wise) is much more involving then Doom, Doom2 OR Heretic.

I have also found, until the recent PSX releases (IE Loaded), that the game play of most PSX games has been non-existent. Although there is no doubt that the Jag will never be able to produce the quality of graphics as in Ridge Racer, Extreme Games, etc. I expect the game play factor to increase as newer games are released for the PSX. Like you, I have not been disappointed in my PSX purchase, but I find myself renting games for this system much more than purchasing. Great for my pocket book, not necessarily good for Sony.

The second point of, albeit minor, disagreement is in the 'bitness' of the Jaguar. I, for one, really wish that Atari would not have made the issue of this that they have. The claims Atari makes lends itself to comparisons with the 'lesser' 32 bit systems. You and I know there is little relation to the quality and look of games that the width of the data path, or size of the word (32 bit or 64 bit). More important are the speed of the processor(s), custom support chips and memory available (both storage, video and system RAM). In all of these categories the Saturn and PSX blow the doors off of the Jaguar.

All in all, a fine piece of editorial commentary. I look forward to reading STReport in the future and hope to see more commentary from you. Keep up the good work.

Thomas Eisenmann

Hi Ralph..

I have visited Atari's JagWire WWW Site on numerous occasions. The site is very well designed. However, for the life of me, I cannot find any options for leaving Atari email.

Visiting their Atari Interactive Web Page is just as bad. I cannot find any options for leaving them mail. I am talking about mail to Atari and not the site master.

Anyway, basically I have read a press release on the New York Times Syndicate Web Page (Computer Daily News) that Atari is getting out of the video game hardware business and basically focus its efforts on porting games to computer platforms and other consoles. I know about the rumours that circulated but it seems that Atari's Tramiels are yet again, SHAFTING the users.

It is a good thing that I sold my Atari (finally) two years ago and went to the Power Macintosh. I am so happy now and I haven't looked back since. It is sad though, that users of Atari's products still have not learned Atari's way.

The Tramiels have done this over and over with the computers (STE, TT, and then Falcon) and now with the Jaguar despite Ted Hoff's assurances that Atari will stick with the Jaguar (he is the only competent executive in the whole company, in my opinion).

Once again, Atari leaves the users who support them HIGH AND DRY. It really is true that Atari could not market immortality. What I wonder now is whether this repeated fumbling of the ball due to gross incompetence or deliberate greed. Perhaps it is a bit of both.

My last remaining investment in Atari is not surprisingly, going down the tubes as well. ATC shares. I spent almost $1100US of my money to buy ATC shares back when it was at $6 a share thinking that it could once again go up to $12 3/4 since it had gone from $1.50 to $12 3/4 in a matter of 2 months. I was very wrong. It did go up to $8.5 and I should have sold then (when Sega settled with Atari) but I held out having misplaced faith in Atari. My shares are now worth less than $2.

Nevertheless, I think Atari Interactive is the best move Atari could have made (short of declaring Chapter 13 - closing shop). They obviously cannot compete with Sega and Sony (soon to be Nintendo) in the 32/64 bit video game market, even at $99US for the Jaguar console (a great price).

At least now, ATC shares just might bounce back to above $6 and I can finally get my investment back. I assure you that once this happens (if this happens?), I will sell my shares and NEVER AGAIN look at Atari. I have nothing but contempt for Atari's management (with the exception of Ted Hoff, whom I really feel bad for having to put up with the Tramiels) and will never again recommend anything Atari to friends or strangers. I am only sorry I stuck with Atari as long as I did.

Now it is time for delusional Atari computer users to realize that all the Falcon clones in the world will NEVER bring back a vibrant Atari computer market. They should get out now, while they can get a little $ for their Atari computers. Regardless of what they say, 8 or 16 MHz 68000 machines running 640x200 at 4 colours are NOT anywhere near state-of-the -art or even the bare minimum these days.

If they want to retain their software investment they should buy a Power Macintosh and the Magic Mac emulator (or whatever it is called) which runs as fast as a Falcon on a lowly LC III (68030 25Mhz), which is far lower than even the bottom-of-the-line Macs these days. While the Mac market is not nearly as big as the PC market, it does have 23 million users, more software developers than ever before, an upcoming new major OS revision, industry-winning and market leading hardware/software technologies and much more.

Oh and one more thing. Everything expressed herein is my PERSONAL OPINION ONLY, and may or may not accurately reflect reality. Just in case Atari decides to sue me for libel! I would not put it past them these days.

Please feel free to publish this message in ST Report. Perhaps it will open some eyes.

Regards,

Shervin Shahrebani.

PEOPLE… ARE TALKING

On CompuServe

compiled by
Joe Mirando
73637,2262

Hidi ho friends and neighbors! Boy, what a week it's been. I've just concluded my latest project at work. Since my place of employment is working toward QS9000 quality control certification, it has been our goal (and my mission) to combine one of our manufacturing machines and a computer to provide the ability to log and manipulate all pertinent information (in our case, temperature, pressure, and dimensions) to produce quality control reports to a customer's specifications. Does that sound like a tall order? Trust me… it was. Despite a few false starts, the system is now up-and-running. I had a really tough time designing all of the computer screen controls and displays so that they were both fully functional and easily useable by people with a minimal knowledge of computers.

The company that we contracted to install the system was only too happy to let me "play around" with designing the user interface. When they saw what I had come up with, they liked it.

Does this new wonder system run on an Atari?? GET REAL! Unfortunately, it is PC only and requires at least a fast '486 and 16 meg of memory. So why am I bringing the subject up in a predominantly Atari column? That's easy. The screens that I designed and implemented are quite a bit like what you see when you turn on your ST, Falcon, or TT. I included easy-open icons that lead users directly to the function that they want to use, descriptive and colorful real-time displays, and easy ways to name, save, and retrieve files. I was quite proud not only that "my" ideas were well-received, but that these ideas have been around for a decade right here on my desk. I know that it's a small victory but, hey, ya gotta get 'em where ya can, right?

Well, let's get on with the reason for this column: all the great news, hints, tips, and info available every week right here on CompuServe.

Atari Computing Forums

Joris Vincken asks:

"How do I get the software to log in with my Atari to Compuserve and Internet? I was promised to receive it by mail, but this is to much trouble for the guys at compuserve, so I should call the Atari sysop. Here I am, but for how long???? Or

can I better use my money to light my cigarette??????"

The big Kahuna himself, Master Sysop Ron Luks, tells Joris:

"I don't know who promised to send you software from CompuServe, because CompuServe does not (and never has) sent out Atari software for the system. Neither do the sysops. You can buy some commercial telecomm software from the handful of places that still stock some Atari goods or you can use your PC to download some shareware/freeware telecomm programs from library 2 of this forum. The Atari and the PC share a common (720k) floppy disk format."

George Kopecki tells us:

"I need to use one of my STF-1040's (TOS 1.0) as a VT-100 terminal. Can anyone suggest a good VT-100 emulator program/accessory?

(I'm accessing both CIS and Internet from a Mac. If I find and download a good Atari VT-100 emulator program to this Mac, how do I transfer it to the Atari?)"

Mike Mortilla tells George:

"…When I got my very first ST, I stupidly bought a VT 100 cartridge which I never used. It has a VT 100 terminal built in. I even have the manual for the thing!!!

Email me your address and I'll send the thing to you for free. I never used it and never will. I'll never be able to sell it and just hate to just throw it away. This is a good way for me to recycle it!

When I get your address I dump the cart and the manual in a padded envelope and send them out US Mail. If you want faster service (UPS, etc) I'll send it out COD for shipping or you can send me the shipping charges. Whatever…"

George tells Mike:

"Grateful thanks in advance! US Priority Mail is fine with me. I'll send you $10 back for shipping, OK?

I sort of wonder if this cart uses the ST's RAM or does it have a RAM of its own. I will use it to emulate a Synclavier II terminal with the Atari, and I heard some unconfirmed rumors that for such use a RAM size of around 30 - 40K 'might' be necessary.

(Given that the original VT-100 never had more than 10K, I am not sure if this really stands)

The only way to find out the truth is to give it a try… :-)"

Cam Eggleston posts:

"I think that you should change the logo back to the Jaguar design, I may only be 12, but Im the future of this busness."

Sysop Ron Luks tells Cam:

"We won't be changing back to the Jaguar logo because the future of Atari Corp and its activities is clearly cloudy but we do know that the emphasis is not the Jaguar. It may be PC gaming (the latest announcement) or some other endeavor, but it certainly doesn't seem to be the Jaguar."

Cam tells Ron:

"Ok, thanks for telling me sir, this is my personal opinion and it probably doesn't matter to you, the jaguar may not be the future of atari gaming but right now, it is. I appreciate your reply and thank you once again for considering my "Wish."

Doug Pratt tells us:

"In their 1995 year-ender article, "Editor and Publisher" magazine listed the significant events in the world of syndication. Right up front was "On the Fastrack/Safe Havens creator Bill Holbrook…even developed the "Kevin and Kell" online comic that doesn't appear in print newspapers at all!"

They even printed one of the strips!

Looks like the Forums who are carrying K&K are on the forefront of something new and significant, just like we hoped. This is a good opportunity for Bill and me to say THANK YOU to the Forums and Sysops that have carried the strip since September when it kicked off. We've had a lot of fun, and this is just the beginning!"

On the subject of BattleSphere by 4Play (which is nearing completion according to Tom Harker of 4Play), Harj tells Tom:

"Thanks for the encouraging news. I will be picking up several copies of Battlesphere along with Catnet boxes. Sven of the "unofficial Jaguar Page" played a recent version and gave Battlesphere glowing reviews in his Jaguar Interactive area. I'm looking forward to this title."

Randy Baer adds:

"I know I speak for many of the fellow forum members here when I say THANK YOU! A lot of us have been really wanting this game, and I am very happy to hear that we will, in fact, be getting it. Your support to the Atari Jaguar community is most appreciated.

IF Defender 2000 and Breakout 2000 make it out along with Battlesphere…wow. That's some burial for the Jag!"

Michael McQueary posts:

"With as big as gaming is right know, wouldn't this be the best time to do a commercial. You have the cheapest system on the market. Defender 2000, Missle Command 3D, and Tempest 2000 could sell lots of systems for you. Sega fell way behind Sony in the gaming race in Sept - Oct. Sony was every where! Then Sega went into their big ad campaign, and boy have they closed the gap.

Virtual Fighting games are the rage right know. A goo commercial on this would really help. People would love to play a good virtual fighting game on a system that can produce like the Jag. And hey what a concept only $99.00.

I have been lucky enough to have a store that rents Jag games. I was really amazed at how many games there are for the Jag. People think just because the PlayStation, and the Saturn have sold a couple of hundred thousand machines the war is over. Not even close. All they have done is free advertisement to let the masses know the next level of gaming is out there for the choosing. Walk in to any Best Buys, WalMart and K Mart and people are still buying 16 bit sytems. If Atari markets these latest games, which are definitely some of there best, they are in a no lose situation. Not only will they sell all these stock piles Jags, but they will also sell past titles wich should be pure profit. And this makes the Jag just right for third party developers. And one other thing quit advertising in the gaming magazines. Spend that money somewhere else. Every time I see a really neat Jag advertisement I think cool and then a few pages latter there is an article tearing the Jag apart. If any one did see the ad they probably would change there mind after reading the article I think the thing that worries most people here on the forum is everyone says the Jag is dead. And everyone at Atari says that it is not. But for a company that is worried about a lack of sales seems to be very passive. This is a great window of opportunity, lets not miss it!"

Don Thomas of Atari tells Michael:

"Hmmm. You have to look at a lot more than just trends. Actually, this   time of year is not the best time to do a lot of advertising for seasonal goods. Gaming sales pick up a lot through the holidays. Spending too much too early takes away

from what is available during times of the year that we know there will be a productive response."

Well folks, that's about it for this week's fun. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when…

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

EDITORIAL QUICKIES

WARNING!!! NEW VIRUS…………

The Lorena Bobbit Virus

"Turns your hard disk into a 3.5" floppy!!"

YIKES!!

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