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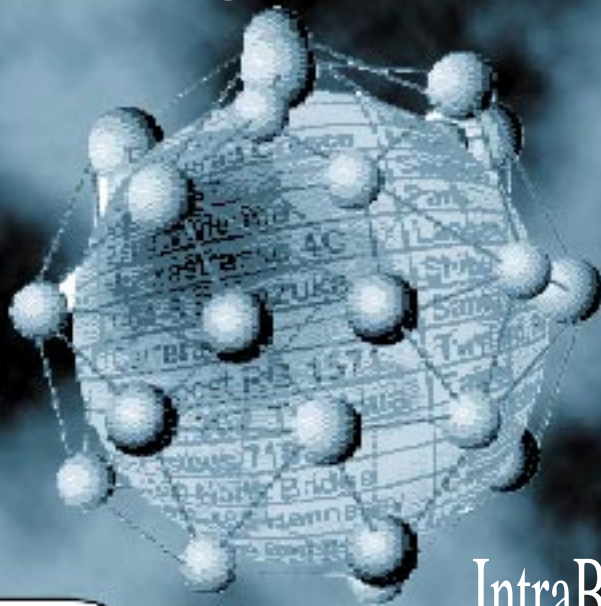
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KIP CUG

Redefining the Internet

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IntraBuilder

Paradox

dBASE



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At the next meeting of KIP CUG

Check us out at <http://www.kipcug.org>

Next meeting

BORLAND INTERNATIONAL

Hurstbourne Hotel & Convention Center

Tuesday, October 1, 6:30 p.m.

From The Editor

If you follow the trade publications much, you no doubt have heard the rumors about where the software market is headed.

Seems like we are going to be dealing with software that is licensed over the Internet and not that comes to us out of a box.

The long-term goal of the big software companies is to license their product in some form akin to Java, and have users access it over the World Wide Web rather than go out to the store and buy it in a box.

I find this a bit disconcerting! Where will I spend my free time if there is no computer software store down at the mall? No more hour after hour of walking through the aisles looking at the boxes and wondering if they are the answer to my prayers.

More importantly, what will I use to cover the walls of my computer room? No more trophies? No more boxes of shelf ware to line the walls and attest to all of my friends and neighbors that



JOHN L. GILKEY

“Sure I have the latest version of Gunk Ver. 10.0. There’s the box right there!”

No, the software wizards would have me get by with nothing more than an icon on my desktop.

For sure, if there are no boxes of software, there will be no manuals or other amenities. Everything will be on-line. I hate on-line documentation!

Compound the situation by the speed of the wien now and its anticipated ability to deal with the glut of new users in the future, and you begin to see my concern.

It’s hard enough getting logged on to your favorite system now, what will it be like when you have to log on to get a directory of your hard drive?

I’m not really sure I am ready for the next major “advancement” of the computer world. Call me old fashion, but I sort of think we should make software in a box work before we move on to bigger and better things.

I/O

**Kentucky Indiana PC
Users Group
(Newsletter business only)
467 Accrusia Avenue
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**Editor-in-Chief
John L. Gilkey**

**Assistant Editors
Mike Romeo
Sharon Kinney-Romeo
Bonnie Zepka**

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Direct all newsletter correspondence to: I/O, 467 Accrusia Avenue, Clarksville, IN 47129-2831.

Contributing staff writers

**Judy Lococo, Libby Thurman, Fred Soward,
Sharon Kinney-Romeo, Michael Romeo,
Robert Myers, Steve Goldberg,
Debbie Bulleit**

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E
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B
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R**



Kodak DC20

The Model A Ford of digital cameras

It might sound a little strange at first to think of Kodak, that bastion of film in a yellow box, to be in the electronic camera market. But they are, and for good reason. Digital photography is where the market is heading, and there's nothing Kodak or anyone else can do about that. The company is adopting the philosophy that it's better to go with the flow and gain market share where you can.

The Digital Science DC20 camera is Kodak's lowest priced entry into the consumer market, and it seems destined for its own "Kodak moment." With a suggested retail price of around \$350, and available at a discount of \$50 to \$100, it should find its way into many homes to replace the family snapshot camera.

If you have a PC or a Mac, most of the investment is behind you. Add a color printer and you are set to make buying film a memory.

Even at its highest resolution, the pixels, or picture elements, in the CCD (Charge Coupled Device) imaging chip of an electronic camera are gigantic compared to the biggest cluster of grain you will ever see on a roll of film. The result of dealing with a fixed number of pixels is that there are finite limits to how big you can enlarge your digital picture and maintain good image resolution.

A pixel is a point in the picture where the imaging chip records the color and intensity of light. Put enough pixels together and you can make up an image. It's something like digital audio. In digital audio, samples of the frequency and intensity of a sound are taken at intervals and stored on some recording medium. When you play the samples back at the right speed you get a reconstruction of the sound. With a picture, you record enough points close enough together so that when you send them to



THE DC20 photographed by a cousin, Play Inc's Snappy.



The Digital Science DC20 camera is Kodak's lowest priced entry into the consumer market, and it seems destined for its own 'Kodak moment.'

a screen or printer in the right order, you get a reconstruction of the picture.

The DC20 can generate an image 493 by 373 pixels in its high resolution mode or 320 by 240 pixels in its standard resolution mode. At 72 pixels per inch standard screen resolution, that makes a standard high resolution picture 6.847 by 5.181 inches. That's big enough for most home snapshot purposes. It's important to remember that the bigger the piece of the image that gets stored in a pixel, the lower the resolution or sharpness of the image.

At best, the camera will store 8 high resolution or 16 standard resolution images. In my test, the camera would occasionally display a memory full light with only five high resolution images stored. Once full you must connect the camera to your computer through the supplied cable and off-load the images using software provided with the camera.

Unfortunately, the camera has no way of telling you how many pictures you have taken or how many are left. It's up to you to remember. There is also no ability to look at pictures once they are stored in the camera without connecting to your computer, or to erase a bad image. When you push the erase button, you empty the memory.

Additionally, you must use the supplied software to change the camera's resolution. All of the pictures in a photo session must be of the same resolution: high or standard. There's no mixing allowed.

Lastly, the camera does not support a flash attachment, although that generally does not present a problem with its effective ISO rating of 800 to 1600.

The camera is fixed focus from 2 feet to infinity and uses automatic exposure to control its shutter which can range from 1/30th second to 1/4000th second. Aperture settings ranging from f/4 to f/11. The unit takes 24 bit pictures which are stored in 1 Mb of internal memory. Weight is 4.2 ounces (without the 3V lithium battery (\$8) and the unit measures a scant 1.2 x 4 x 2.4 inches. There is no moveable cover to protect the lens. Only a piece of photo grade glass.

Keep in mind, however, that Kodak's

Comparison of Kodak DC20 image resolution



LOW RESOLUTION image of I/O computer central.



HIGH RESOLUTION image of I/O computer central.



A closely-cropped photograph can render good image detail as in this picture.

goal with the camera is to make it as inexpensive as possible, and the missing elements would most certainly add to the cost.

Kodak supplies a CD-ROM containing image processing software with the camera in addition to cables to fit a PC and Mac. On the PC, the cable plugs into an open serial port using a 9 pin connector. The software will automatically find the port where the camera is connected.

You get a copy of PhotoEnhancer Special Fun Edition as well as a copy of MetaTool's Kai's Power Goo (You may remember this product from an earlier review.)

For the techies in the crowd, the program installs a TWAIN driver that can import the image into any program supporting the industry standard data acquisition format. In this case, the program is PhotoEnhancer. You might remember that Power Goo also supports data acquisition directly from the DC20 camera.

Acquiring pictures is straightforward provided you have the necessary port. I tried it on a friend's machine without a free port using the serial port dedicated to his mouse. The attempt was without

success. The program would load low resolution black and white images called a "slide table" but would not load the actual images. A free serial port is essential!

PhotoEnhancer is some pretty good image processing software. The average non-technical person will find it quite useful. It allows tweaking your images in a very straightforward manner. Computer nerds will find it a bit mundane, but still very functional.

It also allows you to quickly create cards, calendars and flyers in a very user friendly manner. A component known as "FunPix" allows you to create some technically complex special effects using a very simple user interface.

Since I just recently reviewed Power Goo, I won't go into the details of the program except to say that this falls into my personal "must have" group of programs. It uses MetaTools "liquid image" technology to allow you to stretch and modify an image in exciting ways.

Today's high resolution color ink jet printers have the ability to take a photo from a DC20 and give you an image that will stand up well against a conventional photographic print. Plus, you have a digital image without a costly scanner. You can include the images in your letters, flyers or just about anything else you can generate on your computer.

I recently sent a close personal friend a series of digital images as part of a letter. Even though it was "snail mail" it was some pretty impressive snail mail. The DC20 makes things like this possible.

Kodak's DC20 certainly is a long way from a high end professional digital camera. However, it goes a long way toward making digital imagery available to the masses. You can think of it as the Model A Ford of digital cameras.

If you have comments or suggestions for "On Computers" you can reach me at jlj@mis.net or via snail mail at The Evening News, PO Box 867, Jeffersonville, IN 47131-0867.

Kodak supplies a CD-ROM containing image processing software with the camera in addition to cables to fit a PC and Mac. On the PC, the cable plugs into an open serial port using a 9 pin connector. The software will automatically find the port where the camera is connected.

Meeting

REVIEW

by Sharon and Michael Romeo

As per usual, the meeting got started at 6:30 pm. Judy Lococo, president of our User Group, began with a reminder that the Louisville Computer Fair will be held on Sept 28-29 at the Fairgrounds. The hours will be 10-5 on Saturday and 10-3 on Sunday. A call for volunteers was put out as we will be trying to increase membership by passing out brochures and pumping up the public with our enthusiasm. Bring plenty of the later, we'll provide the former.

This brought our Volunteer Coordinator, Fred Soward, up to the podium with a few announcements. The most important was that Fred would be staying in Louisville for the foreseeable future. Major Fred has now retired from the Army after putting in twenty years. He had previously made plans to take up employment in Madison, Wisconsin and was scheduled to leave us after this month. However, an opportunity has opened up for him here in Kentucky and he has made the decision to stay. Yea, Fred! Judy had gone to Fort Knox during his last week in uniform and presented him with a "senility stick" as a retirement gift. This is a cane with a rear-view mirror and a squeeze horn. As many have pointed out before, Fred was touched. He was proudly showing off his new toy for all to see.

Tom Neukam stood up to let everyone know that he thought the Microsoft Win95 Power Toys (free) was well worth adding to your Win95 desktop. They can be downloaded from "www.microsoft.com". We checked out the site a few days later and found the strangest disclaimer from Microsoft: "we wrote 'em, we like 'em, but they are not a part of Win95 and you can't come to us with any questions or problems". Anyway, we have plenty of friends who use them and all seem to be pleased. Check 'em out.

Tom reminds us that the New User's SIG is held on the 2nd Monday of the month. As always, check the newsletter, the BBS or the web-page "www.kipcug.org" for details on all of

our SIGs.

Attendance was on the small side - about 150. The crowd has been averaging around 225 over the summer and we suppose the downturn was due to the pressures of schools starting up again. As it happens, this was the meeting where our new SYSOP, Paul Ward, came up to the front to take questions about our BBS. Our Bulletin Board is

out to the world and sends the new messages that have been posted to our BBS since the last time. It also retrieves messages from the rest of the world. This is Stage 1 and takes about 15-30 minutes. While this is happening, no one can call into the BBS.

After the message swapping, Stage 2 takes place. This is the process of updating our huge local message database with the new messages that were retrieved. This takes awhile and the time is dependent on the number of new messages retrieved plus whether or not



COMMENTATORS ON ALL THINGS, Dave Puckett, left and Jim Martin, conduct the User-to-User segment of the September KIPCUG meeting.

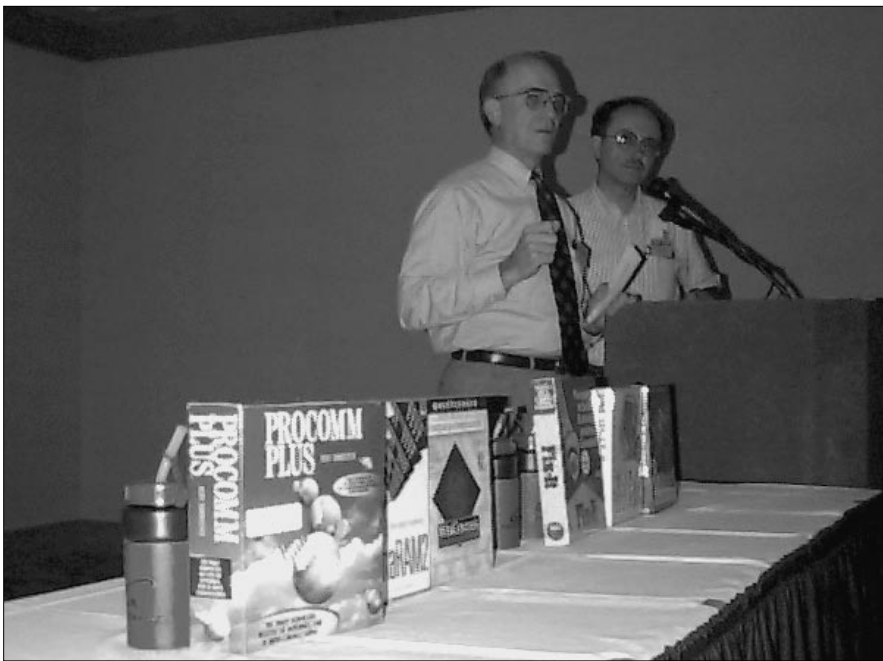
called "The Fifth Dimension" (TFD).

Paul has been on the job since July 4th and has gotten good reviews from all the people that we know. He reminds us that the board is down for 15-30 minutes 4 times a day to exchange message traffic with the rest of the world. The times are: 12:15 am, 4 am, 11 am, 3:30 pm. Here is how it works.

We have 3 phone lines for the BBS. Each comes into a separate PC. The PCs are connected together with LAN-TASTIC. At the times above, line 1 calls

other users are calling in on the other two lines. Even though the other two lines are available, you will probably not be able to gather the latest messages until Stage 2 is complete. Experience has shown that Stage 2 takes about 1 hour at 12:15 am and 1.5 hours at 4 am & 11 am and 2 hours at 3:30 pm.

I-LINK is handled at midnight and the other three are for Internet Mail. Paul tells us that there are no current plans to add to our three 28-k lines. Sorry guys, no ISDN in the near future either.



IF YOU MISSED THE SEPTEMBER MEETING, you missed an opportunity to win a number of prizes supplied by Quarterdeck ranging from WebCompass to some cool coolers.

We make use of the BBS every day. It is a great deal for Internet Mail (check around on pricing - you'll see) and when you combine the I-LINK conferences and useful files available for downloading, it's hard to go a single day without logging on. Of course, the only way to fly is with an off-line mail-reader. We use SLMR; Paul Ward likes ROBOMAIL; Judy Lococo was extolling 1STREADER a few months back - and there are about ten others. The prices range from FREE to \$49.

Each KIPCUG member gets 45 minutes per day and by using an off-line reader, we seem to average only 3 minutes a day on the phone. Want to learn about using an off-line reader? Or more about the BBS? Then you should call the leader of the Telecommunications SIG and make arrangements to attend on the 4th Wednesday of the month. By the way, be sure and contact a SIG leader before attending a meeting. They can then plan the subjects to be covered. Calling beforehand is not a requirement - it just helps to make the meetings more useful.

One more thing. We have started putting our monthly newsletter in ADOBE PDF format on the BBS (and the web-site). This allows you to get it about one week earlier than by mail.

This is the wave of the future, folks. PC User Groups across the country are starting to use this method for distribution. One of the biggest recurring expenses we have is the printing and delivery costs associated with the newsletter. We think KIPCUG should have an option where members can



QUARTERDECK VICE PRESIDENT GARY SAXER was one of the better speakers we have had thus far in 1996. He covered his topic well and was very entertaining.

specify that they would prefer to get it electronically. What do you think? Get on the Board (TFD) and leave your opinions, eh?

User to User with Martin & Puckett

Before each meeting, questions can be penned by users onto index cards. The Jim & Dave Show then attempts to track down some answers from the audience. Yes, some questions do invoke silence. This doesn't deter the duo, however, as they seem to have experience in their own lives with this condition. They've learned how to coax. Or is it cope?

Problem: Can anyone help me with a 286 system that won't boot?

Response: Silence. Jim and Dave's experience recognized there was no way to get sound from anyone about this problem. They slinked off to the next question amid murmurs about upgrading. Good luck to this tenacious user.

Problem: Does anyone here speak KayPro? I want to set up this old PC to be used as a typewriter.

Response: Nope. Please contact Judy if an answer comes up. By the way, did the same person write these last two questions?

Problem: Where can I find Apple IIe

parts?

Response: Maybe Tom Gunther on South 1st street. Maybe St. Rita's school on Preston Ave.

Problem: Can anyone donate an Apple IIe to St. Paul's school? You'll get a tax deduction.

Response: No takers during the meeting but perhaps a reader will respond.

Problem: Has anyone used "First Aid 95" from Cybermedia? Any good? Worth the money (\$30)?

Response: We figure this question had to be from a guest. Members, who love to read every word of the monthly newsletters, knew that our I/O Editor, John Gilkey, had reviewed this product just last month. He detailed many aspects of this program. Check it out.

Problem: I want to upgrade a 486 from 4-meg to 8-meg but I am a bit confused about parity vs non-parity. What's the best way to go?

Response: You must do what the motherboard manual says. You cannot just buy any simm chips that fit. The manual will often list the particular memory companies whose products have been tested with your motherboard. If no manual, then find some way of identifying your motherboard and contact the manufacturer or one of the major memory chip sellers. The major companies often give lifetime guarantees and will buy older memory chips. Remember to use your credit card to counter any irregularities.

Problem: Has anyone dealt with a company named "Surplus Direct"? What has been your experience?

Response: Four or Five satisfied users. No negative responses. Surplus Direct sells outdated software at reasonable prices.

Problem: Can a CD-Rom for Win 3.1 be used on a Macintosh?

Response: Maybe. A CD-Rom plastic disk can be used on both if it was created by the manufacturer to be used on both systems. A CD-Rom drive can be used on both if it is a SCSI drive.

Problem: What's a good program for composing music? I just want to enter my composition through the keyboard, not a MIDI device.

Response: One user spoke up to say that "Music Time" was able to handle

the composing through both methods. He bought it at one of the local stores.

Problem: What's the deal with this Found Money web-site I heard about on Oprah Winfrey?

Response: Gary Saxer answered this one. He took us to two sites - FreeMoney.com and FoundMoney.com - and showed us how we need to be careful about some sites that end up charging you money for information.

Problem: Who has time to watch Oprah?

Response: Gary Saxer seems to.

Featured Presentation- QuarterDeck Corporation with Gary Saxer

Quarterdeck is located in Marina Del Rey, California and Gary can be reached by e-mail using "saxer@quarterdeck.com". He is Vice President of Technical Services and invites you to check out his web-page located at "www.quarterdeck.com/~gsaxer".

Gary's demo made use of a Pentium-120 portable with 16-meg of ram running under Windows 95. He used a 28k modem to access the Internet.

Do you remember life before Windows? Back in the Dos Days, Quarterdeck had a powerful product called Desqview. This was THE way to multi-task with Dos - fast task switching with up to 9 windows. It was text-based for the longest while, then later on acquired graphical capabilities. It even came to co-exist with Windows. We knew of quite a few locations using this product in the last half of the '80s. This was my introduction to Quarterdeck.

As awesome as Desqview was, the product for which they garnished world-wide fame was QEMM (Quarterdeck's Extended Memory Manager). Years ago, they tacked on an analysis program called MANIFEST that also achieved world-class status. It's up to version 8 now and QEMM is a mature product with over ten years of experience.

So what is Quarterdeck up to these days? Well, they're not standing still. They have been acquiring other products with a vengeance. They have scooped up Hijack, MagnaRam, SpeedyRom, WinProbe, FixIt,

CleanSweep & ProComm - and I'll bet this is not all. These are great products with good reputations. The same thing has been happening with Symantec over the past 4-5 years. They too seem to be buying everything in sight.

Another interesting direction for Quarterdeck is the Internet. They have been moving strongly in this direction and have already achieved quite a visible presence in this arena. They have Web Authoring, Publishing, Browsing and Searching products. They have Internet Gateway and Firewall products for Novell LANs.

As Gary began his presentation, you could tell from his Task Bar that he had over ten programs running. At the end of his demo, he pointed out that the responsiveness of his system (with only 16-meg of ram) was due to QEMM and MAGNARAM.

Gary began with WebCompass Professional. He was excited about this product and with good reason it seems. If you've ever spent any time with the Search Engines located on the Web (Yahoo, Lycos, WebCrawler, InfoSeek, Alta Vista, etc...) then you've noticed a couple of interesting things about them: (1) They all work differently (2) They can easily overload you with tons of matches (3) They don't remember your prior searches. WebCompass is a product that helps you through these problems.

When you tell WebCompass to search, it automatically goes to the Search Engine websites and uses them in the correct manner so that your search is effective. It then analyzes the webpages that matched your search criteria so that a summary of each site can be produced. The sites are then ranked in order of importance to your criteria. The results are categorized according to your interests. Duplicate links are dropped and results are saved so that future searches can be carried out to see what's been added or changed out there on the Web. This product belongs to a class that's been named Meta Search Programs. Is it the best? Well, it won the best of show award at the Fall '95 Comdex.

Gary moved on to Procomm Plus version 3. We all know about this product,

don't we? The gang from DataStorm in Missouri first won the hearts of PC users by offering inexpensive shareware that was hands down better than any other competing modem communications product. When they finally went to a product sold for money, the quality stayed solid while fax, lan and internet capabilities were added. Version 3 has only been out for a few months but the reviews have again been impressive.

The next product was the gee-whiz show stopper of the demo. WebTalk allows Internet Chat Rooms that use voice instead of keyboards. Of course, you must have a microphone and speakers and a sound card. Gary hooked up to a friend in Arkansas. The sound quality was great!

You could tell that Gary wasn't going to have enough time to demonstrate all of his line-up. He finished up with 5-10 minute demos of WinProbe, FixIt and CleanSweep - all useful tools.

Gary brought samples of all of the products that he showed and they were raffled at the end of our meeting. In addition, he brought lots of product literature plus a list of User Group pricing specials that were in effect for KIPCUG. He even waived the shipping charges for those who ordered products that night. Gary was extremely personable and made it clear that he would stay as long as needed to answer our questions. The only real complaint we had was not having 4-5 more hours to check these products out.

We almost always have a PIG-SIG <grin> with the presenter at the end of our monthly meetings. This is where we all drive down to a local restaurant and have some off-the-record talks with our guest. Everyone is invited - it's a great way to get acquainted with the other members. Michael and I weren't able to attend this time and were sure sorry to have missed it. Gary really whetted our appetite for more info on what Quarterdeck has got cooking for the future. The PIG-SIG is another neat aspect (along with the info, raffle, and pricing specials) of membership in KIPCUG. Be sure to take advantage of it. Hope to see ya'll at next month's meeting.

Laptop Surprises

by Lynn L Kauer

Saginaw Valley Computer Association

Recently I started to use a laptop. One of the first programs I installed was my printer driver and Microsoft Office. I wasn't going to install WordPerfect as I felt I could always save files in the WP format-Bad decision!

One of my first tasks was to make an automated template for my office. I remembered a SIG meeting where we were showed how to create a template that would prompt the user for input - the ideal solution for my task.

Now I was presented with an unexpected problem. Although I could make one in MS Word, the likelihood of saving it in WP and having it work was remote at best. So I installed WP on my laptop so that I could use it in harmony with my desktop computer.

The Fun Begins

I started WP and began the creation of the new file. For some reason CG Times was the default font so I decided to change it. Imagine my surprise when I discovered I could only access five fonts that I never use, especially courier, even though I had installed about 20 fonts that I use all of the time. What was going on? Did the minimum laptop install cause this problem?

To find out I reinstalled the complete installation of Microsoft Office software. I was impressed at the speed that the program reinstalled. It searched for previously installed programs, went about its business, and completed the whole installation in less than one minute.

Impressive, but when I checked I was only able to use five fonts. It became more confusing when I started Publisher 3 and discovered that it had the ability to use all of the fonts that I had installed. Something was going on that I did not understand but I knew the solution had to be pretty simple.

But, what was the simple answer I needed? Possibly the printer driver I installed for my LaserJet III had become corrupted. I dug through my cache of disks, found the critter (disk) that came with the printer, and reinstalled the printer driver.

Interestingly, Win95 recognized that I had already installed the driver for this printer and gave me the option to abort the installation or install it as a "second" printer of the same name. What the heck! Install the bugger. I installed it and checked to see if there was any improvement. Same problem, only the same dumb five were available. I checked the WIN.INI file. There were none listed! What was Win95 and my laptop doing to me?

Sleeping Dogs Don't Lie

It was about 3:00 am. The dog was snoring. As I lay in bed I remembered that when I bought my printer, Hewlett Packard sent some disks about two weeks after I registered with them. I got up, searched through my stash of disks to no avail. Then another aha struck me. What was the size and date of the printer driver on my desktop system? A quick check revealed that they did not match. I decided to copy the driver file from my desktop system into my laptop. When completed I checked and sure enough, I had all of the installed fonts available to me. What had happened was the original drivers were for Windows 3.0 and TrueType Fonts were not invented then. In effect, the old driver told my system that the fonts installed on my laptop were not useable by my printer. When I updated the drivers (by copying them from one machine to the other) the driver was able to interpret the fonts and make them available to my system.

Moral

If you get updated drivers throw the old ones away and keep the updated driver in a safe "findable" place. Otherwise you get something that is called experience: "Something that is happening to you that you wish to God was happening to someone else".

Windows 95

System Talk by Libby Thurman

Setting up a system for Internet access can be a complicated process. In some respects, Win 95 does not make it any easier. I really struggled with my set-up and, finally, asked for help from my Internet service provider. The only thing I needed to do to make all work smoothly was type "ppp" for service type when connecting. Sometimes it is the simplest problems that are the most difficult to correct. One strong recommendation is to ask for help. This is nothing to be embarrassed about. It can save you hours of tinkering.

I received this e-mail question that might be of interest to other Win 95 users. After installing, new Internet software, each time the system was booted, a window appeared requesting a log-in name and password. This would appear to be the new program's attempt to complete installation with the connection information. Until this is completed, this window should continue to appear. Completing this information with the log-in name and password used to connect to an Internet provider should complete the process. If you are not ready to complete the process, be sure the software shortcut is not in the Startup directory. This can also trigger dialog boxes and other information windows during the boot process.

Windows 95 registry is another mystery to most users-including this one. I have had a number of questions regarding registry error messages. GW2k, the Gateway Magazine, offered the following tip: When receiving a registry error message, reboot the system in DOS by pressing F8 when you see "Starting Windows 95 . . .". Chose Safe Mode, Command Prompt Only. At the C:\ prompt, type `Attrib -R -S -H System.*\S` and press Enter. Type `CD Windows`. Type `Ren system.dat system.xxx` and press Enter.

If you still get a message about a corrupt registry, reboot F8 Safe Mode, Command Prompt Only. Type `Doskey` and press Enter. Type `Attrib -R -S -H System.*\S` and press Enter. Press the Up arrow key twice, Left arrow key 10 times, type `User.*` and press Enter. Type `Ren System.dat System.xxx` and press Enter. Type `Copy c:\system.lst, C:\windows\system.dat` and Press Enter. Type `Ren User.dao User.Dat` and press Enter. This should make the system emulate a first-time boot when you reboot your system.

As I have not experienced any registry errors since reading this tip, I have not been able to try this and verify that it works.

Another question I have had from time to time regards booting in to DOS. To boot to DOS each time you start your system, open the C:\MSDOS.SYS file in Notepad or another text editor. Locate the `BootGUI=1` entry and change the 1 to 0. Save the file and reboot (Jonathan Lauer in Windows Magazine, September 1996).

Tips and Tricks for Win95

For a faster way to boot into Safe Mode, hold down the Shift key when the "Starting Windows 95 . . ." message appears. (WinNews)

For a faster file rename in Windows Explorer, press F2 as soon as you highlight the file name you wish to change. (WinNews)

The following tip came from Robert Ladouceur. Dynamic link library files (*.dll files) were supposed to be great space savers on your hard disk and great time savers for programmers. They have turned into a nightmare. There are many so-called "uninstall" programs available. They are great except for one thing: they often delete .dll files that are needed by other programs. Equally frustrating are the many programs that replace one or more .dll files with older versions during installation. In either case, when you try to run a program that always ran fine before, you get a message saying it can't find a .dll it needs. One solution is to make dated backups of .dll's. Start with all of them in the Windows and Windows\System folders, then back up just the newly installed ones (if any) in those folders whenever you install new programs. Don't copy the new backups over the prior ones. That would defeat the purpose, which is to make sure you always have the right .dll available. Keep each backup separate. Then, whenever a program asks for a .dll, you'll have it readily available. Thanks, Robert.

Have a Win95 Question or Tip?

If you have a Win95 question or tip, send it to me. I can be contacted through the Fifth Dimension (Libby Thurman), Internet (libby.thurman@tfd.org), Microsoft Network (libby.thurman@msn.com), CompuServe (76450,1453) or mail (P.O. Box 367, Crestwood, Ky. 40014). I will also accept written questions and suggestions at our meetings.

Please include your name and address (e-mail or street) and as much detail as possible, including information about the system you are using. I will reply to the address you include with your question as soon as possible. An e-mail address is preferred. Selected questions and tips will be included in this column. I would prefer no telephone contacts as scheduling, etc. makes telephone contacts difficult.

This column is specifically for the Win95 operating system. I realize that Win95 and Win95 applications are often closely related, and, as I do use a variety of other Win95 applications, I will consider questions regarding these applications, but I cannot guarantee a reply or any useful information.



Making database browsing easy in the complex world of the Intranet

Borland International Inc. has announced the IntraBuilder line of web-based data-driven applications development suites for Windows NT and Windows 95. IntraBuilder, IntraBuilder Professional and IntraBuilder Client/Server offer the easiest ways to develop and host live, browser-based database solutions over internal corporate intranets.

The announcement was made during the keynote address at Borland's seventh annual Developer's Conference being held this week at the Anaheim Convention Center here.

A pre-release version of the core IntraBuilder product is available for user evaluation, without charge, over the Web at "<http://www.borland.com/intra-builder>" beginning Wednesday, July 31, 1996.

"IntraBuilder is the only complete set of robust web database tools suitable for both developers and webmasters of all skill levels. Visual report builders, dynamic HTML, JavaScript, forms designers, web servers, reusable components, database design and access, and more — all in one box," said Paul Gross, senior vice-president of research and development for Borland. "And with support for JavaScript, Java applets and ActiveX controls, IntraBuilder bridges the industry-standards gap of the Internet. All you really need is net access."

Combining Borland's rich database tools with JavaScript — the new web scripting language developed by Netscape Communications Corporation and Sun Microsystems — IntraBuilder is a completely integrated suite of tools that lets corporate intranet webmasters and data-

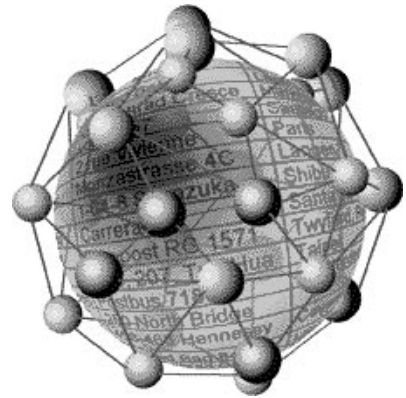
base developers easily create and deploy live-data applications. Using robust, visual two-way tools, IntraBuilder users can quickly create web database solutions over intranets without traditional programming.

"With the announcement of Netscape One Open Network Environment, Netscape is seeing the emergence of a new class of JavaScript-based Internet development tools such as IntraBuilder that will catalyze a whole wave of network applications for Intranets," said Marc Andreesen, co-founder and senior vice-president of technology at Netscape Communications Corporation. "We expect JavaScript to revolutionize Web-based applications development for the network the way Visual Basic transformed Windows programming for the desktop."

Evan Quinn, research manager at International Data Corp. of Framingham, Mass, said, "The shift from building document-centric to data-centric applications for the Intranet is clearly under way. IntraBuilder's easy-to-use data driven approach should appeal to a variety of developers, from power users, to Webmasters, to client/server developers."

JavaScript is an open, crossplatform Javabased scripting language that lets developers quickly and easily build a new generation of network applications for their Intranets.

IntraBuilder can create web-based data-entry forms or dynamic reports without learning the JavaScript or HTML languages at all. Yet IntraBuilder allows easy modifications via full access to the JavaScript



“
The shift from building document-centric to data-centric applications for the Intranet is clearly under way.
”

EVAN QUINN, RESEARCH MANAGER
INTERNATIONAL DATA CORP.

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Directory of KIPCOG Leaders



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Nancy Lorey	Treasurer	280-0468	
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Call the Helpline 24 hours a day for:
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* How to join KIPCOG *

* Information about upcoming meetings and events *

* Help with hardware or software problems from members who are experts *

* Request a complimentary copy of I/O, the monthly newsletter of KIPCOG *

The Fifth Dimension

Official Bulletin Board of KIPCOG

The Fifth Dimension is available 24 hours a day at (502) 231-0053. Data transmission standards are: 1,200-28,800 bps, 8 data bits, 1 stop bit, no parity, v.42, v.42bis., v.32, v.32bis. Operating with three modes.

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NOTE: I/O is published electronically in addition to its printed edition. Advertising materials not supplied in electronic form will **not** be included in the electronic edition.

The Sig

Kentucky Indiana



Scene

PC Users Group

Investing

Meets monthly at the Louisville Aero Club, Bowman Field, Louisville, Kentucky. Call leader Doc Viele at 452-6878 for additional information including date and time. Please note, this SIG does NOT discuss relative merits of mutual funds.

Knowledgeman

Call leaders Danny McPherson at 456-6200 or Jim Martin at 452-4916 for meeting times and locations.

Mainframe

Meets on the third Tuesday of the month at the offices of IBM on the 14th floor of the Providian Building, 4th and Market Streets, Louisville. Contact leader position vacant in memory of Tom Carr. Watch for additional information.

New Users

Meets 2nd Monday, 6:30 p.m. at Pereroy Computers, 908 Dupont Road, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact leader Tom Neukam at 893-2800 extension 135 for more information.

OS/2

Meets 4th Tuesday in the Providian Building, 400 West Market Street, Louisville, Kentucky. Use the Market Street entrance and proceed to IBM Suite 1400. Leader is Alan McCutcheon, 587-8285.

Paradox/dBASE/Quattro Pro

Contact SIG leader is Steve Goldberg at 282-5186 for further information and meeting place.

Telecommunications

The Telecommunications SIG meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at AdWare Systems, Inc. located on the 10th floor of the Waterside Building, 101 E. Main Street. For more information, contact SIG leader Joseph Xie at 569-5423 or Sharon Kinney-Romeo at 568-5192.

Windows Word & Excel

Meets 4th Monday at 6:30 p.m. at the John Hancock Building 10th Floor, 9300 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, Kentucky. Leader is Jim Travelstead, 852-4761 (W) or 375-4796 (H).

Visual Basic

The Visual Basic SIG meets at 7 p.m. on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at CompuPro located at 1410 New Albany-Charlestown Pike in Clarksville. Contact Martin Campion at 637-9878 for additional information.

IntraBuilder

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

applications source code IntraBuilder automatically generates. IntraBuilder creates dynamic databased HTML pages on demand.

"IntraBuilder truly exploits the power and promise of JavaScript, making it far easier for us to create data-driven Internet and Intranet applications for corporate clients," said Dana S. Kaufman, chief technical officer of Apogee Information Systems, Inc., an application development firm building and deploying data-driven web applications. "Borland has once again delivered the right combination of object-oriented programming support, powerful development tools and robust client/server access in this world-class visual development tool."

IntraBuilder supports any web server running under Windows NT and Windows 95 that supports Netscape's server plug-in API, Microsoft's ISAPI or CGI. The CGI protocol works with a wide variety of Windows servers including the Windows 95 and NT versions of O'Reilly's WebSite. All versions of IntraBuilder will ship with a web server included in the package. Specific details of which servers would be available were not disclosed.

IntraBuilder natively provides access to a wide variety of database formats from Microsoft Access to Oracle, including native support for Borland's Paradox and Visual dBASE. Database



IntraBuilder offers a rich development environment.

servers supported with native drivers include Borland InterBase, Microsoft SQL Server, Oracle, Sybase, Informix, and IBM DB2, among others.

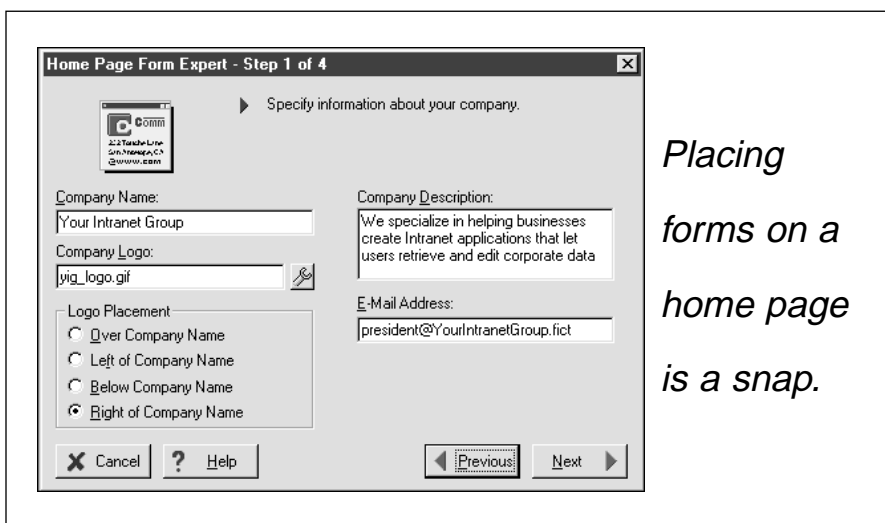
Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Explorer are among the major web browsers IntraBuilder supports.

Overall, IntraBuilder offers the only complete set of tools for data-driven web site development:

IntraBuilder's two-way tools mean that developers never need to commit to code-only or designer-only methodologies; JavaScript source code is always available. JavaScript is easy to learn and use, yet contains many sophisticated features such as a dynamic object model, associative arrays and the ability to easily integrate components created in JavaScript, Java applets and ActiveX controls. IntraBuilder's thin-clients provides for fast execution with little or no local programming required, even for

complex applications. IntraBuilder's feature-rich Experts walk users through designing tables, home pages, forms and reports. IntraBuilder Experts automatically write the JavaScript. IntraBuilder includes more than 20 Visual Property Builders to guide users through all the appropriate options for an object property. Visual Property Builders help users fine-tune the properties of any control or form. IntraBuilder embraces existing standards such as Java applets, Microsoft Windows ActiveX controls, ODBC, HTML, CGI, Netscape server plug-in API, and ISAPI, plus emerging standards through its open architecture. IntraBuilder's high performance engine supports major data sources from local formats, like Microsoft Access, Borland dBASE and Borland Paradox, as well as SQL formats. IntraBuilder hosts a complete set of database administration tools needed to integrate databases into applications, for data controls and for multi-user support. Database administrators will appreciate tools for creating tables on remote servers, defining referential integrity rules and encrypting tables, plus development tools supporting application security. Transparent to users, Borland's unique state management features enable applications where users can create, update, query and browse live data, effectively bridging the worlds of database management with the web and intranets.

Price and formal availability of all three versions of IntraBuilder will be announced at a later date.



Placing forms on a home page is a snap.

Visual dBASE for Windows

*This new version allows
Developers to Publish
and Search Databases
on Internal Corporate
Sites as well as the
Public Internet. Trial
Intranet Tools Available
Free From Borland's
Website.*

SCOTTS VALLEY, Calif. — Borland International Inc. has announced the availability of Visual dBASE Professional with Intranet Tools, a new version of Visual dBASE that includes a set of utilities that allow dBASE and

other Xbase developers to easily create interactive database applications for the World Wide Web and corporate Intranets. Visual dBASE

Professional includes the Visual dBASE 5.5 database and application development environment, the Visual dBASE Compiler, and Borland's new Visual dBASE Intranet Tools. For those developers that currently own Visual dBASE and its Compiler, the Intranet Tools are available separately from Borland.

"The Visual dBASE Intranet Tools continue Borland's commitment to deliver Internet-enabled versions of all our developer products," said Ross Dembecki, Borland's Group Product Manager for Desktop and LAN development tools. "These new Visual dBASE tools allow Xbase developers to easily extend the reach of their existing and future database applications to the vast number of users being empowered by Web browsers."

Example: Web database applications written with the Visual dBASE Intranet Tools can be run from "http://webtools.borland.com/wthtml/wt.htm".

For current owners of Visual dBASE and its Compiler, a trial version of the Intranet Tools can be downloaded from Borland's corporate website, "http://www.borland.com".

Visual dBASE 5.5 is the industry's only second-generation, object-oriented Xbase database. Based on leading-edge RAD tools and a flexible, yet easy programming language, Visual dBASE provides application developers with the productivity and power to control data. Besides support for both Windows

3.1 and Windows 95, Visual dBASE pioneered Two-Way productivity tools for users and developers, and features high performance on real-world computing platforms combined with robust client/server capabilities.

Visual dBASE Intranet Tools

The Visual dBASE Intranet Tools provide an easy way for users to publish desktop and server database tables on the Web, so that they can be accessed and queried by users on any platform with a standard Web browser. All the database formats supported by the Borland Database Engine can be published with these tools, including dBASE, Paradox, ODBC, Sybase, Oracle, Microsoft SQL Server, Informix, and Borland InterBase.

The Visual dBASE Intranet Tools consist of three components for easy and powerful Web database development: (1) the Table Publish WebExpert, (2) the Table Search WebExpert, and (3) DeltaPoint Inc.'s WebTools for Visual dBASE.

Visual dBASE WebExperts

The Visual dBASE WebExperts are designed to simplify the process of developing database-driven Web pages. They provide a step-by-step, question-and-answer way for developers and users to connect their databases to the Web. There are two Visual dBASE WebExperts:

Table Publish WebExpert - Automatically turns user-defined database tables into static HTML pages for copying to any WWW server, including home pages residing on online service providers.

Table Search WebExpert - A point-and-click way to create dynamic CGI applications for querying database tables across an Intranet or small-scale website.

DeltaPoint Inc.'s WebTools

DeltaPoint WebTools for Visual dBASE is a class library and collection of development utilities that provide a CGI interface and web development tools for creating database-driven web

sites. With DeltaPoint WebTools, users can design WWW-enabled database applications using Visual dBASE and the Visual dBASE Compiler. Licensed by Borland from DeltaPoint of Monterey, California, these tools are written completely in Visual dBASE, and include a powerful HTML-publishing engine, class library source code, a reference guide to classes, methods, functions, and many documented examples.

Pricing and Availability

Visual dBASE Professional with Intranet Tools is shipping this week from Borland and will be available next week through major software distribution channels. The estimated street price (ESP) for Visual dBASE Professional is \$495.95. A special upgrade offer is also available for owners of competitive database products at an ESP of \$329.95. Current owners of Visual dBASE and the Visual dBASE Compiler can purchase the Intranet Tools directly from Borland for \$24.95. For more information or to place orders, customers can call Borland at 800-233-2444, or contact their local reseller. All estimated prices are in U.S. dollars and apply only in the United States and Canada. Dealer prices may vary.

Product Requirements

The Visual dBASE Intranet Tools require Visual dBASE and the Visual dBASE Compiler, and work with most Windows CGI 1.1-compatible web servers, such as O'Reilly's WebSite 1.1 for Windows 95 and Windows NT, or Windows HTTPD 1.4c for Windows 3.x.

The evolution of mice

by Joel Schwartz
Santa Barbara PC Users Group

In August 1993 I did a review of mice and trackballs. Since then, new input devices have hit the marketplace and I want to address them. I call them "The Mice Mutations." The most interesting of these mice mutations is the touchpad.

Actually, I had three touch pads, a combination keyboard/touchpad, a trackball, and a cordless pen to play with. Usually, I prefer not to review more than one item at a time. Usually, I prefer not to do comparative reviews, pitting one manufacturer against another; but this is the last leap year in the century.

The items that I have for review are: the Alps Desktop touchpad, the Touche touchpad, the Cirque Desktop touchpad, the Cirque Glidepoint keyboard and lastly, the Logitech Marble trackball. Which input device am I using now, after testing all of these devices? The Logitech Marble. The rest of this review will tell you why.

Let me say first that I have yet to find the perfect input device. Up to the point that I started this review, I had been using a Kensington trackball and was fairly happy with that. It was smooth, precise, and comfortable. It was ergonomically sensible and the software was stable. But never to be one to leave well enough alone, I had to run off after the latest in input innovation.

The first experiment was the Cirque Glidepoint touchpad. It has a 2 x 3-inch touch-sensitive pad surrounded by three sensitive switches. Move your finger across the pad, and the mouse pointer moves. In fact, the

mouse pointer moves fairly evenly and with good control and precision. The first few days were joyous. Then the novelty wore off. One of the features common to all touchpads is their double-tap, double-click feature.

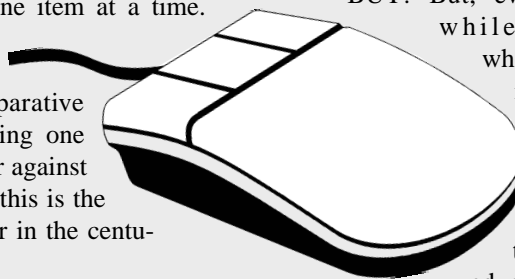
Double-tapping the keypad will simulate a double-click of the left mouse button. Very easy. Double-tap and move your finger on the pad and you are simulating a click-and-drag. Very, very convenient and addictive.

BUT! But, every once in a while—especially when you're tired, irritable and not terribly attentive—the double touch would accidentally get activated, even though you

just put your finger firmly on the pad in just a single touch—or you thought it was a single touch. Then, before you realize what you are doing, you are moving stuff around.

Directories and files get dragged-and-dropped into strange and unnoticed places...lost forever. Sometimes the items are copied, sometimes moved, sometimes deleted; depending on where they were on the window and where you left them when you saw what you were doing. Massive bummer! All of the touchpad software provides a double-tap defeat option. The problem with Cirque's version of the Glidepoint software was that tech support could not get it to work. Goodbye Cirque.

Well, let's try another manufacturer. Their device is sure to work. Touche was next. Their touchpad, nicely contoured for the wrist, had a nice software feature in addition to double-tap and double-tap-defeat, namely, "edge motion." This elegance includes the



continuation of coarser motion when your finger hits the edge of the pad, e.g., just hold your finger at the edge and the cursor keeps going until you lift your finger.

What went wrong here? Well, true enough, I could turn off the hated double-tap. But where the heck did they put the switches? Not on top? Yes, on top. Not to the sides or on the bottom, but on top. Who designed this? Don't manufacturers try out their products before they put them out on the market? You can't click-and-drag this layout with one handful of thumb and four fingers. You need at least two hands. Absurd! Too bad. It had a nice shape otherwise, the software worked well, the edge feature was great and the price was the best (SRP \$60).

Número tres, the Alps desktop touchpad. High hopes abound. The switches are in the right place; in fact, the switch for the left and the right buttons may be assigned to either side button or to the bottom button. The third button may be enabled for click-lock. The switch tension is perfect and the double-tap-disable worked. How nice, I have a fully functional touchpad. I HAD a fully functional touchpad until I noticed that my Windows 95 could not shut down gracefully. Once I installed their version of the Glidepoint software, Windows 95 would lock up just before the orange "OK to shut off power" message on shutdown. Again, tech support was very responsive but unvictorious. Adios, Alps.

Let's try the Cirque keyboard with built-in touchpad. Maybe that will work better. The first problem is that the switches for the touchpad are located on the left side of the keypad—good for touch typists, people that type with both hands on the keyboard, the way you are taught in school. But for us antediluvian two-finger keyboard sloths, it's the Touche story all over again. Furthermore, the touchpad is located where the inverted-T arrow keys were once located. Accountants ain't gonna like that. (Cirque just released a natural wave keyboard with the arrow keys restored and the switches righteously located below the touchpad. Alps' com-

bination keyboard seemed to have the keys and switches in the right place, also.)

Let me say now that the tech support for all three companies was excellent; 800 numbers and human beings to answer the phone; no delays and courteous responses. Huzzah! If only the products worked.

The trackball is an older, safer concept—but it works. The Logitech Trackman Marble is named for its marble-sized ball (1.5 inches in diameter). Although much smaller than a Kensington ball, this one is the correct size for the way in which it is used. The Kensington is steered with the index and/or the middle finger, whilst the thumb and pinkie control the left and right buttons.

The Trackman line, however, has always been a thumb-steered device, not always a comfortable nor precise design. This time it works very well. The case is shaped like a large Pismo clamshell. The ball is under the thumb and three long switches are at the top but are finger-length and curved to hold the fingers comfortably. It's as comfortable and supportive of the wrist and hand as the current Microsoft mouse.

The ball and motion sensor are also technically unique. The ball is very smooth and very highly polished, colored red with what appears to be randomly spotted black dots... somehow reminiscent of the Measles. The ball is super smooth in motion because it is not tied by friction to three idler wheels for motion sensing. The motion of the ball is detected by an internal laser beam and a reflected light detector.

By not having any mechanical binding or tension, the ball is very, very smooth and sensitive, so that the thumb is then capable of the fine precision movements necessary for PC use. This is the best trackball I have used to date. Lest it seem that I am on the Logitech payroll, let me add that their tech support wasn't technical nor supportive. In fact, when you consider the aggravation of getting through to them, I'd normally say, "try another supplier." Incidentally, the reason for my call to tech support

was some terribly obscure conflict between Visio and the optional custom drivers that Logitech supplies. The problem was minimal and the fix was simply to not load the optional driver.

One of the parameters that makes any input device a success is the location and tension of the left and right buttons. I have reviewed two devices, so far, that were impossible to use. I have reviewed three others where the position of the switches was merely uncomfortable. I have reviewed three devices where the button tension was too heavy (i.e., stiff). The buttons on the Marble are very light, as light as they can be before becoming unmanageable or unstable.

This brings to mind a suggestion for the I/O device industry. Why don't you people make your devices with buttons that feature adjustable tension. Let each user set the click weight to their own preferences. If that's too difficult, make the switches easily replaceable by the user and give the model numbers for replacement switches with other switch tensions. While I'm in the suggestive mood—how about mounting the switches on the device with Velcro. Let me position it myself. How about that? A completely customizable trackball or touchpad! Hey, Mr. Logitech, I'm for hire.

Too late for review is yet another I/O technology, the ball pen. Our own Leonora uses an Appoint pen and swears by it. Unfortunately, her model is tethered to the PC by the data cable from the top of the pen to the PC. Appoint now makes a cordless pen which I imagine would be more comfortable and manageable. BUT, I haven't tried it. I received it too late for inclusion in this review. It consists of a pen with a cable for over-night battery charging. Come daylight, off goes the cable. The receiver is a large eye that connects to the normal serial port. Who knows what kind of unsuspected irritation lurks inside of that technology? You don't know until you try it.

CLOSED!

Boston Computer Society closes its doors for good marking end end of the beginning of computers

by Judy Lococo

Kentucky Indiana PC Users Group

I just finished visiting the web page of the Boston Computer Society, which is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, and largest computer user groups in the United States. There is a press release on the page announcing that the BCS Board of Directors voted to dissolve & disband the group and will cease all operations within the next month. This is extremely disturbing news to me, not only as an APCUG Advisor, but also as a user group President. Yes, I may be considered an alarmist, but knowing that a group with a membership of 25,000+ for a very long time, has now closed its doors, is a bit disconcerting to me, thank you very much. Especially when I already know that there are a lot of smaller groups than BCS that have already bitten the dust.

I do realize that the BCS was not your typical user group, and not just because of its size. A lot of its membership was not even within shouting distance of the group, and only belonged to receive the newsletter. Their monthly meetings weren't epic proportions, either, since most of the membership attended a SIG meeting in lieu of a general meeting. But their sheer numbers alone gave them the admiration and respect of all other user groups around the world, and rightfully so, since they had a "professional" look and feel, a resource center, and access to the very best computer minds in the industry.

For one thing, I have to wonder if bigger is actually better. User groups, like most everything else, is a numbers game. We have to have sufficient num-

bers to enjoy a most-favored user group status with our vendors. And these numbers aren't just the membership numbers, either, but attendance numbers at our monthly meetings and how well a vendor is treated when they visit us. Before a vendor agrees to come to Louisville to give us a demonstration, they ask for as honest an estimate of the expected attendance as we can give them. And if a user group consistently overrates this number to them, they soon learn not to believe the group and will send them a "presentation in a box" that they can do themselves. So I hope you all understand that when you come to a meeting each month, somebody has done quite a bit of work to assure that a vendor will be flying into town to do it.

We also have to have sufficient dues-paying members to support all of our benefits, not only for each member, but for the community too. Of course, the membership takes precedence, but there are benefits to our members by the community outreach we do, too. However, our numbers have been dwindling, both in the membership and meeting attendance, and I have to admit that this is a growing trend among user groups across the country.

Yes, the Microsoft meetings still attract larger crowds, but we simply cannot have only Microsoft products at all our meetings. Yes, we need to address members who are miles apart in their computer expertise & experiences. No, there is no way to please all of the people all of the time. So if there are some meetings that you think are "over your head" or that are "of no interest" to you, please consider that your attendance is important in order to insure

that another meeting somewhere down the road that is of interest or understandable to you, will happen.

I realize losing our home at General Electric has been a bitter pill for a great many of our members to swallow. It has been for the Board of Directors, too, knowing all the while that we weren't actually freeloading or disturbing the GE routine all that much. We were continuously told that we were exceptional tenants, but it was out of our control. And the inconsistency of having to hold meetings in different locations, at different times of the month, and with erroneous calendars & publicity, has not helped this situation either. But you have some responsibility with this too. All of your Directors are listed in the newsletter, with a good deal of phone numbers listed therein, both work and residence phone numbers, too. However, these directors cannot read your mind, so if you think there might be something wrong with the meeting schedule, you need to pick up the telephone and call one of us, too. Check The Fifth Dimension for bulletins about our meetings. Check <http://www.kipcug.org>, as the meetings are posted on there too.

But most of all, talk to your directors. We are here to try to help you. We are here to keep KIPCUG vital, active & thriving. But a group of 20 people cannot do this without YOUR help. When we all have to make a living as well as try to do the best we can for KIPCUG, it gets to be quite a balancing act sometimes. The day is rapidly approaching when you will not be able to sit idly by & let the Board do it. And from what I can tell, we are all in this together...

WinHelp Office 95

Blue Sky Software offers a wide diversity of utilities in this bundle designed to provide professional help files

by Kathy Stewart

When I received Blue Sky's WinHelp Office 95 (HTML Edition) to evaluate, I was astounded by the number of software utilities included for managing and developing Windows Help systems. With this suite of products, you can create professional Help systems with exciting new features.

A few of the possibilities include adding jumps to a Web site, converting Help files to HTML so that your clients can access the information on the Internet, and inserting sound and video in the Help systems. Easy-to-use online tutorials and printed manuals provide step-by-step instructions for each utility.

Help Authoring

The Help authoring tool in the suite is RoboHELP 95. Used in conjunction with Microsoft Word, RoboHELP enables you to create Help systems for Windows 3.1, Windows 95, and Windows NT. RoboHELP provides standard Help features such as jumps, multiple hotspot graphics, secondary windows, and popup definitions. It also supports the new features of the Windows 95 Help engine: Contents tab, What's This? Help, authorable buttons, etc. An instructional video called Mastering WinHelp is included to help you learn the basics of RoboHELP as well as some of the more advanced features.

I can only compare RoboHELP to one other Help authoring tool - WexTech's Doc-To-Help. Both RoboHELP and Doc-To-Help are strong tools which yield quality Help systems, but their approaches are different.

Certain functions in Doc-To-Help are automatic; whereas, in RoboHELP you make manual selections. For example, Doc-To-Help links topics automatically based on the hierarchy of headings you use and thus creates the Related Topics jumps. With RoboHELP you specify each link between topics. Doc-To-Help also automatically inserts jumps to glossary definitions based on a word list you create. In RoboHELP you search out each instance of a word or phrase and indicate whether you want to insert the jump.

The primary emphasis in RoboHELP is the Help system. You have the option of importing existing text or keying the text and converting the Help system to a document file that can be reformatted for a printed manual. Compiling and testing the Help file is much faster in this environment - which seems more like a programming environment.

With Doc-To-Help, the emphasis is creating a DOC file from which you can produce a printed manual and a Help system. You have the option of marking text as Help only or manual only. There is a one-to-one correspondence between the features in the printed manual to the Help file. For example, the Table of Contents in the manual automatically becomes the Help Contents. Based on the DOC file, the software generates the necessary RTF and HLP files.

It seems that RoboHELP would appeal to those Help authors who prefer or need more control over the construction of a Help system.

The following sections discuss the other utilities which WinHelp Office 95 (HTML Edition) offers. Unless otherwise noted, you may use them with Help files that were created by RoboHELP or other Help authoring tools.

Adding Windows 95 Functionality

Two common complaints about Windows 3.1 Help systems are the inability to perform full-text searches and to print more than one topic at a time. With WinHelp

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HyperViewer or WinHelp Compatibility Wizard, you can now add this functionality to new or existing Windows 3.1 Help systems. The main difference between these two utilities is how the user accesses these features through the toolbar and the way the outline of the Help system displays.

The Find feature allows you to search by any word or phrase in a Help system. You are no longer limited to the keywords defined by the Help author. The resulting display for a full-text search lists all the topics with that phrase and shows the actual text from each topic that contains the phrase.

An expandable outline of the entire Help system is also available which shows all the topics. This feature enables you to quickly navigate to a specific topic and to select multiple or all topics to print.

Moving to Windows 95

To provide a smooth transition for Windows 3.1 Help authors to Windows 95, WinHelp Office includes the Moving to WinHelp '95 Kit. This toolkit includes Mastering Windows 95 Help, an informative development guide for Help authors who are new to the Windows 95 environment. This book illustrates the differences between Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 Help systems and explains how to implement the new features of Windows 95 using RoboHELP.

The toolkit also contains the Moving to WinHelp '95 Porting Tool. This software utility enables you to create a Windows 95 Help system quickly from an existing Windows 3.1 file without needing Word 7.0. You may use the resulting Help file on either Windows 95 or Windows NT.

Integrating Sound and Video

Are your Help files rather boring? Use the WinHelp Video Kit to integrate sound and video into your Help systems. This toolkit includes Software Video Camera, a program for recording all actions in a Windows application as they appear on your screen (such as mouse movements). If your PC has a sound card, you can also record narration for the video files. Two versions of the Video Kit are available: 16 bit and 32 bit.

HTML Conversions

If you want to present information in a Help system on the Internet, try the HTML Tool Kit and RoboHELP HTML

Plug-in. The toolkit consists of a HTML converter and Mastering HTML for Help Authors, a guide which explains the basics of HTML authoring and Internet terminology.

The Help-to-HTML Converter allows you to convert any Windows 3.1 or Windows 95 Help file into HTML files for use on the Internet or an internal intranet. Each topic in the Help system becomes a separate Web page. A Home page is created based on the Help contents, and GIF files are created for the graphics in the Help file.

As with any conversion tool, you will need to do some fine tuning. Currently, HTML technology does not offer a perfect match for all the features provided in a Help system. For example, a glossary definition in a Help file appears in a pop-up window. After the HTML conversion, the definition is on a separate Web page. Also, the HTML converters I have tried cannot maintain the hanging indents for procedural steps or bullets. Using a converter is definitely quicker, however, than starting from ground zero especially when you have numerous hypertext links.

As the name implies, the RoboHELP HTML Plug-in utility works in conjunction with the RoboHELP 95 authoring tool. After you compile a Help file, simply click on a button to generate HTML files from within RoboHELP.

Other Help Utilities

From detecting errors to providing jumps to the Internet, the WinHelp Toolkit offers a variety of other utilities for the Help author:

Help-To-Word. Converts Windows 3.1 HLP files to Microsoft Word document (DOC) files. This feature is useful when you have lost the original source files. With the DOC file, you may then regenerate all the files necessary for creating a Help system.

Help-To-Source. Enables you to recreate the HPJ and RTF source files for a Windows Help (HLP) file. Again, this feature is useful if the source files have been lost. To use this utility, you need Windows 95 or Windows NT version 3.5.1

WinHelp Inspector. Displays the following types of statistics for any Help system: topic titles, search keywords, fonts used, file size, compression, and the date/time the Help system was last

compiled.

WinHelp BugHunter. Enables you to detect errors in context-sensitive links between a Help file and an application. While the application is running, BugHunter displays the map number that is being called each time you perform an action that executes Help, such as clicking on a Help command button.

WinHelp Graphics Locator. Searches your PC and/or network drives for various types of graphic files including BMP, SHG, and WMF files. This feature allows you to locate graphic files quickly, view the graphics, determine the width/height and number of colors in the graphics, and copy them into your project directory.

WinHelp Graphics Library. Provides bitmaps that you can add for emphasis to your Help systems. Examples include bullets, buttons, books, pages, and computer bitmaps.

WinHelp Style Guide. A Help system which provides tips and techniques on designing Help files. It includes examples of features that you can add to Help systems such as tables, bullets, and secondary windows. Tips on fonts, colors, design, and layout are also presented.

WinHelp Internet Access. Creates jumps in Help systems to Web sites on the Internet via browsers such as Netscape, Microsoft Internet Explorer, and Mosaic. This feature allows your Help users to access your company's Home page on the Internet for technical support and marketing information.

Product Pricing

WinHelp Office 95 (HTML Edition) is available at a special promotional price of \$799 (list price is \$1741). Several of the utilities/toolkits can be purchased separately, and not all of them require Windows 95 to operate.

For more information, contact Blue Sky Software Sales Department at 800-459-2356; International: 619-459-6365; Fax: 619-459-6366. Their Web site is <http://www.blue-sky.com>. For e-mail: info@blue-sky.com

Kathy Stewart is a Senior Documentation Development Specialist for Adware Systems in Louisville, Ky.

What a breeze!

Allen Interactive offers an easy way to learn about the Windows 95 operating system

by Sharon Kinney-Romeo

If you want an enjoyable, informative way to learn Windows 95, you should check out this product from Allen Interactions. It comes on CD and is really quite neat. Multimedia sound and video have been used to produce a quality learning system.

Have you ever used the tutorials that come with software products... like the ones that come with Excel or Word? These things are useful, but often a tad dry for my taste. They often make use of graphics to show mouse movements and menu options, but these efforts will come across as pretty anemic after you've experienced the calypso sound, humorous animations and moving pictures of Breeze Thru.

Start with a little Caribbean music, add some interesting animated animal friends and a beach covered with clam shells containing "pearls of wisdom" and you are on your way to a pleasant learning experience that will have you reggae-ing your way to Windows 95 mastery.

The humor in this product is delightful. All sorts of characters are used to prod you to the correct answers and to quiz you about various features. Take too long to choose a selection and your "Mum" might pop up to remind you that this button she's pointing to is the way onto the next screen. Wait even longer and your weird uncle might slide up from the bottom of the screen to remind you to listen to your dear sweet Mum. The sound quality is excellent and the accents are charming. The

music that comes and goes as you travel along really keeps your toes tapping and is one of the memorable features that comes to mind when you think back on your lessons.

This software has been written to make you feel comfortable and relaxed. It starts off with an INTRODUCTION button on the first screen that explains how to use the product.

Then you are offered three approaches for your learning of Windows 95.

1. If you don't know where to begin, what to try first, second or third, then take one of the TOURS to step you through the related features of Windows 95.
2. Do you want a video overview on a topic that explains in plain English how to accomplish a task? Then choose BREEZE THRU TV.
3. The TV overview is great but one learns by doing and the heart and soul of Breeze Thru are the instructional simulations of tasks offered thru the Clam Shells.

These Clam Shell "pearls of wisdom" cover all of the major topics. Here's a sampling: Files & Documents, Icons, Windows, Desktop, Communications, Programs, Briefcase, Folders, Disks, Printing, Settings & Hardware and Multimedia. There is even a section called the Top Ten Pearls.

Each Clam Shell contains related Tasks pertaining to the Topic. For example, the "Files & Documents" shell contains Tasks about deleting files, renaming files, copying files, etc...

“

The humor in this product is delightful. All sorts of characters are used to prod you to the correct answers and to quiz you about various features.

”

Choose a Task and you first get a brief description of what you will learn. If it's what you need, then go on to click the "Study Task" button. You are always urged to attempt the tasks first by yourself. If you perform it correctly, then you receive all sorts of praise. If you do it wrong, there are step-by-step descriptions and TIPS and DEMO buttons for optimal instruction.

One feature that stands out is the COACH graphic. While you are attempting a task, the thermometer gets hotter when you are close to doing it right and cooler when you are on the wrong track.

The TIPS button is available to help you through the current step of the task. This is an interesting button to try even when you've been successful because it gives alternative mouse clicks or key-strokes to complete the task. If you're like me, you like to keep your hands in position on the keyboard as much as possible instead of constantly shifting from mouse to keyboard and back!!

The results of your lessons are record-

ed on a scoreboard that keeps track of how many steps you've seen (this time and previously, how many times you "got it" on the first try and how many times you were wrong on the first try).

System Requirements: 486 DX/33 ISA or better (486 DX/33 PCI, VLB or better is recommended), 8 MB Ram, 256 color capable video card & monitor (thousands of colors recommended), MS Windows 95 installed, double-speed (2X) CD-ROM drive or better, Sound Blaster card or compatible, MS Mouse or compatible, Silly hat (optional)

I have to say that the multimedia and humorous aspects of this product really won me over. I can't wait to see what future products come from this company. The price is a little high for an individual - I was quoted \$25 a piece in lots of 100. This is obviously a product aimed for businesses and groups. Quantity discounts are available.

“

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While you are attempting a task, the thermometer gets hotter when you are close to doing it right and cooler when you are on the wrong track.

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