



Meeting Preview

Tax Attack with Intuit

BEFORE you know it, it'll be tax time again. The 1997 tax season arrives with extensive changes to federal tax law, and to help its customers take advantage of many new tax-saving opportunities, Intuit has released the latest versions of America's best-selling personal tax preparation software, TurboTax and MacInTax for 1997.

The sweeping changes in the tax laws have created over \$150 billion in estimated tax reductions, making this year truly the time for individuals to use TurboTax and MacInTax to claim their fair share. Both versions provide expert tax advice and many helpful filing tips. A representative of Intuit will be at the next General Meeting of the Danbury Area Computer Society on February 3 to explain the benefits of the programs.

More than one hundred tax experts pored over the new tax laws, pooling their knowledge to create the new

TurboTax and MacInTax. Whether it's capital gains, education expenses, or family credits, the software comes ready and able to help you maximize your tax savings. "Taxpayers are being confronted with the most sweeping and complex changes in tax laws since 1986, making the use of tax software like TurboTax and MacInTax more important now than it ever has been," said Intuit Chairman Scott Cook. "With the 1997 versions of TurboTax and MacInTax, we listened to what our customers wanted out of their tax software and gave it to them. The result is software that sets new standards for personalized tax preparation, Web connectivity, and truly seamless electronic filing."

The DACS meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. with casual networking at the Danbury Hospital auditorium, 24 Hospital Avenue. The monthly business meeting starts at 7 p.m., with the presentation beginning around 8 p.m.

Meeting Review

DEC Defines Common Ground Between PC's and Workstations

by Wally David

MANY PEOPLE refer to a PC as a workstation if a computer is attached to a local area network (LAN). A PC, or any terminal on a network, can be considered a workstation if it is used to perform computing functions and accesses files or applications on a server. However, there is a class of computers that are called Workstations, and Digital Equipment Corporation makes a line of them.

David Kollm, the Manager of Product Planning and Life Cycle, Workstations Business Segment, came to the January General Meeting of the Danbury Area Computer Society to tell DACS members about these new workstations.

The best part of the David's presentation was the videotape he showed at the outset, a tape of numerous video and movie projects produced using Digital Alpha Workstations. I don't remember all the clips that were shown, but among them were Titanic,

Babylon 5, and many impressive pieces from movies I did not recognize. The tape was truly a stunning display of work, all of which was done on DEC equipment.

The presentation from that point on, however, was not what I would have called mesmerizing. If there is one thing I like less than PowerPoint slides on a PC, it is PowerPoint slides on an overhead projector. But that is exactly what we got. David showed us slide after slide of facts and figures about the entire line of DEC Workstations.

In a nutshell, Digital's new family of workstations offers a range of choices to meet various performance needs. For Windows NT users, Digital offers the i-Series, featuring Intel Pentium® Pro and Pentium® II processors with MMX™ technology and highly scaleable multiprocessing support. The a-Series is built on the superpowerful Digital Alpha processors.

President's File

Each April, the DACS Board of Directors elects officers to conduct the day-to-day business of the organization. In accordance with our incorporation and bylaws, officers must be paid-up dues-paying members of the DACS. The Board is looking for DACS members to take on the leadership for the year ahead. If you have time, energy, and enthusiasm, we could use your help.

Officers Sought

Since I have decided that three terms is enough presidential leadership for any organization to endure, I will be looking forward to reading the new president's file in future issues of dacs.doc each month. While we have a number of members and officers to whom we can look forward to leading DACS, there is room for you to help. Whatever level of interest and time you have, please let me know. We need you and the fresh enthusiasm of your ideas.

The elections will take place at the Board Meeting in April. Any DACS member may run for any office. If you would like to run as an officer, please speak with me. If you'd like to help in any capacity, you should attend the board meetings; members are invited. We meet the first Monday after the General Meeting, which is usually the first Tuesday of each month.

New to DACS

With the cooperation of the weather, the January Advanced E-mail meeting was held as planned. With the help of Wally David, we reviewed the ins and outs of our mail ox. Attachments and forwards were discussed,

as were a number of protocol and spam issues. The meeting was well received and will be repeated.

New to Windows

The February special new-to meeting will feature Windows. The meeting will be held in the Danbury Library at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 11. At this meeting, you will have a chance to explore the Win95 interface, the Control Panel, the Explorer, right and left clicking empowerment, and much more. It's an excellent opportunity to dig into or review the Win 95 interface. The new version of Win98 expect later this year will build on the this platform. The time you spend expanding your knowledge of Win95 will help as Microsoft expands the interface this year.

New to the Net

In March, we will be circling back to the Internet with our original New-to-the-Net program. We'll start with a discussion of the Internet's origins. You will learn how you can set up a dial-up icon to your network provider, followed by an overview of browsers, search engines, bookmarks, and e-mail. The March meeting will be held in the Danbury Library at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 19.

Other new-tos

To continue bringing special programs of the greatest interest to the membership, we will have a preference form at the next general meeting. With your input we will attempt to focus the new-to meetings on the areas you suggest.

T1 Surfing

Gene Minasi, our vice president of locations, has been working on permission for us to have access to the Danbury Hospital's T1 line for the Internet surfing segment of the general meeting. We appreciate all your efforts Gene. Thank you.

The combination of "always on" with virtually unlimited bandwidth will set the stage for the next cycle of our computing network experience. With the speed a T1 line brings, we may be in a better position to appreciate the connectivity we will enjoy in the near future. By stretching our minds, we will be able to see and understand the many business and personal opportunities ahead of us. To the avid compatriots, "always on" may be the "party on" mar-dras of the next millennium.

— TOM MCINTYRE
mcintyre@eci.com

dacs.doc

Membership Information

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DACS, its officers and directors assume no liability for damages arising out of the publication or non-publication of any article, advertisement or any other item in this newsletter.

The editors welcome submissions from Dacs members. Contact Frances Owles, at 860-868-0077 (jones@ct1.nai.net) or Allan Ostergren at 860-210-0047 (dacseditor@aol.com) or Upload on DACS BBS, file area 1, 792-2752. Advertisers, please contact Charlie Bovaird at 792-7881 (aam@eci.com)

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Applications & Hardware to enhance

dacs.doc are always welcome.

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Jeff Setaro
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748-6748

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Membership: Jim Ragsdale 203 743-2039 **WEB Page:** Jeff Setaro 203 748-6748

HelpLine

Volunteers have offered to field *member* questions by phone. Please limit calls to the hours indicated below. Days means 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; evening means 6 to 9:30 p.m. Please be considerate of the volunteer you are calling. HelpLine is a free service. If you are asked to pay for help or are solicited for sales, please contact the *dacs.doc* editor; the person requesting payment will be deleted from the listing.

Can we add your name to the volunteer listing?

Program	Name	Phone #	
Alpha Four	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
AOL	Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(e)
AutoCAD	Peter Hylenski	(203) 797-1042	(e)
C/UNIX/ObjC	Kenneth Lerman	(203) 426-4430	(d e)
C ++	Reg Charney	(914) 833-0762	(d e)
Clipper	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
COBOL	Charles Godfrey	(203) 775-3543	(e)
Dbase/DOS	Alan Boba	(203) 264-1753	(e)
DOS	John Gallichotte	(203) 426-0394	(e)
GeoWorks	Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
Electronics	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	(d e)
FOCUS	Jim Scheef	(860) 355-0034	(e)
Hardware	John Gallichotte	(203) 426-0394	(e)
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Internet	Nick Percival	(203) 438-9307	(d)
Lotus 123R5W	Ben Carnevale	(203) 748-1751	(e)
Macintosh OS	Bob Constantine	(203) 730-1634	(d e)
Magic PC	Hira Suri	(203) 748-2473	(d e)
Microsoft Access	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
MIDI	Arnold Gross	(203) 746-1727	(d)
Multimedia	Ed Fitzgerald	(203) 222-9253	(d e)
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R:BASE	Jerry Frieárich	(203) 740-7175	(e)
Statistics & Data Analysis	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(d e)
Viruses	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	(d)
Visual Basic	Nick Percival	(203) 438-9307	(d)
Windows 3.1	Nick Strother	(203) 743-5667	(e)
	Ben Carnevale	(203) 748-1751	(e)
WordPerfect	John Heckman	(203) 831-0442	(e)

Directors' Notes

DACS' Board of Directors held its monthly meeting at the Resource Center in Danbury on Monday, January 12. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, David, Gingras, Heere, McIntyre, Ostergren, Preston, Setaro, and Mrs. Owles. Also present was Jim Scheef. Chairman Ed Heere presided. Secretary Larry Buoy kept the records of the meeting. The minutes of the December 8 meeting were read and approved.

Finance and Membership

Treasurer Charles Bovaird reported checking and postal balances of \$15,625.01, receivables of \$315.00, and postage on hand of \$155.92 for a total cash position of \$16,095.53, with no accounts payable. He also reported that membership stood at 661. After comments on the much improved mail distribution of the January newsletter, Mr. Bovaird withheld judgment on the permanence of such improvement.

New Equipment

Chairman Ed Heere announced that, with the concurrence of Jeff Setaro, he had negotiated with a supplier of projection equipment for the purchase of a new unit meeting the criteria previously discussed and authorized for use at general meetings.

Elections

President McIntyre reminded the directors that officers for the coming year are to be elected at the April meeting of this Board, and that since he will not be a candidate, he would volunteer to chair the nominating committee. His offer was accepted.

History of DACs on the Web

The Board then discussed preparing a definitive write-up of DACS' history for inclusion in its Web Home Page and other appropriate media. The project was welcomed in principle, and it was suggested that long-term and past members of DACS be asked to help compile the text.

Membership

With respect to increasing DACS' membership, it was suggested that short presentations by DACS personnel be offered during adult education or continuing education courses in our area. It was also suggested that we find someone to report DACS news to the media on a regular basis.

Continued on page 4

DIRECTORS' NOTES *Continued from page 3*

Chairman Ed Heere proposed the possibility of enhancing online presentations at general meetings and the initial foray into providing Internet service, via satellite, by a local cable television provider.

Bruce Preston said he would prepare a questionnaire seeking feedback from the membership on SIG interests and leadership for distribution at a general meeting and inclusion in dacs.doc. He also proposed that a possible workaround to the restrictions imposed on our Web Home Page by the Danbury Public Library's regulations would be a server of our own tied in to the Library's and the possible donation of such equipment.

—LARRY BUOY

**DACS New Members
12/14/97 thru 01/17/98**

- 1) Dana Cassel
- 2) Chris Colby
- 3) Michaela Fisher
- 4) Nicole Guttilla
- 5) Stephen Kaufman
- 6) William C. Lawrence
- 7) Dave Lincoln
- 8) Mary Nield
- 9) Siobhan Nield
- 10) Ursa Reinhardt
- 11) Mitchell Schlansky
- 12) Jeffrey Schwarz
- 13) Leslie Siegel
- 14) Ed Simonovich
- 15) Ann C. Thorpe
- 16) Tina Tressic
- 17) James P. Voelzke
- 18) Dave Young

Local Area Internet Providers

AT&T Worldnet	800-967-5363
Cloud 9	914-682-0384
Concentric Networks	800-745-2747
C. P. Connect	203-734-6600
Delphi Internet	800-695-4005
Earthlink	800-395-8425
East Coast Internet	207-3260
Erol's	888-463-7657
GTE Internetworking	800-927-3000
IBM/Advantis	800-888-4103
Internet84	203-830-2122
Interramp/PSI	800-827-7482
LocalNet of Fairfield County	203-425-3535
MCI	800-550-0927
Microsoft Network	800-386-5550
Netaxis	203-969-0618
NETCOM	800-353-6600
North American	800-952-INET
Netmeg Internet	888-863-8634
On The Net	203-270-6388
Paradigm	800-664-INET
Putnam Internet Services	914-225-3234
Smart World Technologies	203-790-4600
SNET Internet	800-408-8282
SpryNet	800-sprynet
TIAC -The Internet Access Co.	203-323-5957
Web Connect of Ridgefield	203-438-7650
WebQuill Internet Services	203-7501000

This is for informational purposes, not an endorsement of any service.

**Did we miss anyone?
Let us know by calling
Jim Finch
203 790-3654**

PC HINTS

Can't figure out how to capture and print your screen image in Windows 95 or NT? Here's how.

- Press PRT SCRN on your key board.
- Start MS Word and create a new file.
- Go up to menu bar and click on EDIT .
- Click on PASTE.
- Print the file in the usual way.

Cool, huh?

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

if the membership date on your mailing label reads:

EXP. 12/97

If that's what it says, you need to renew your DACS membership—now!

Its that time of year ... again

In the event of severe weather please listen to one of the following stations for cancellation information.

WFSB TV	Channel 3
WTHN TV	Channel 8
WVIT TV	Channel 30
WLAD AM	880
WINE AM	940
WTIC AM	1080
WATR AM	1320
WWYZ FM	92.5
WRKI FM	95.1
WTIC FM	96.5
WDAQ FM	98.3



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For the most demanding UNIX applications, the au-Series, featuring Digital Alpha processors running Digital UNIX, is available.

It was difficult to absorb the various features of all the different lines and understand exactly what they can do for the average user. In fact, that might have been the real problem I had with the presentation. As someone who uses Windows 95 and mainstream business and graphics applications, I just could not get enthusiastic about these high-end machines. For those of you who are interested in finding out more about Digital Workstations, check out their Web site at www.digital.com.

WALLY DAVID, a member of the DACS Board of Directors, is also a member of the newsletter editorial committee. He is the network administrator for the National Shooting Sports Foundation, a nonprofit trade association for the gun industry. Wally can be reached via e-mail at wallydavid@myself.com.

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Contract programmer skilled in C++ or Dexterity (similar Language, unique to the Great Plains Dynamics software) needed to set up data input and EDI download conversion modules to our NT network integrated manufacturing system (ICONTROL & Dynamics).

Knowledge of Btrieve helpful, since your modules will have to interface with the Btrieve file structure.

Call Dominique in Human Resources (203-798-9373) for an appointment to review the specs.

Ambel has ongoing permanent position requirements for CNC programmers experienced in CNC milling and CNC lathe operations. Call to discuss career opportunities.

AMBEL PRECISION MANUFACTURING
159 Grassy Plain Street
Bethel, CT 06801

Games Review

Two Speed Games

One great, one awful

By Joshua Gaberel

WANT TO HEAR about one of the best racing games ever? It is called **Need For Speed II**, published by Electronics Arts. In this game you have some of the coolest cars ever—cars like the Lotus Esprit V8 or the Italian Italdesign. If you are dying for better cars, here are some more: the Ford Gt90 and the awesome Ferrari. These are just some of the good cars in the game. If you want to know more about any of them, you can go check out their history.

So now you are thinking, "I have all these cool cars to pick from, but I would like to have some good racetracks to choose from, too." Do not worry. There are plenty. People who just want to train can go to the proving grounds. More advanced drivers can go to the Outback. Or if you really want to get rough, there are other, more difficult tracks like Pacific Spirit, Mediterranean, and the daredevil Mystic Peaks. If you want to know more about all the racetracks, you can do that, too.

Now you have to choose what kind of racing you want to do. You can choose from full race to drag racing with Traffic turned on. Overall, I think that **Need for Speed II** is the best racing game ever, and no other game will overtake that position. I very much doubt that any other game will have so much speed. For information you can go to the Electronic Arts Web site at <http://www.ea.com>

Forced Alliance

When I was given some game software called **Forced Alliance** to review at a recent DACS meeting, I thought,

"Wow, this will be fun." So I roped in my brother, Zachary, and a friend of mine to help me play it. **Forced Alliance** is a space combat simulator that offers players an innovative mix of diverse game/play elements—space, combat, alien diplomacy, character role playing, and tactical strategy. The setting is an open-ended universe, and the game involves a lot of spaceship landing strategy. The goal is to get through two buoys in space and return your spaceship to your home base in a safe landing. But that's the problem.

The three of us tried for a couple of days to figure out how to land without crashing the aircraft of **Forced Alliance**. But we all got very discouraged because we couldn't figure out the proper way to do it. We just kept on crashing. A character (some commander of the forces) in the game is not very motivating when he says, "The minute I laid eyes on you, I knew you were a loser; now I can see from your flying how much you want to prove it to me." Well, I think *this* guy is a loser. I also think the gamemakers made this game hard for kids to play (and we can usually figure out how to play any game!). Even my parents couldn't figure it out. My mom's not great with games, and my dad didn't have much more success than we did. Maybe we all just need more time to figure it out. But while that's happening, maybe Electronic Arts could write better instructions.

JOSHUA GABEREL, a junior DACS member and is an incurable gamesman. You can reach Joshua by e-mail at mgaberel@ct1.nai.net

AmeriCares Needs Computers

The AmeriCares Free Clinic of Danbury is in need of two Pentium 133 computers. The clinic, located in Ives Manor, has been open since January 1997 and provides primary medical care to under- and uninsured residents of Danbury and its surrounding communities. The computers will allow the clinic to install a computerized patient record system, which will greatly facilitate its provision of care. Please contact Laura Galusha at 203-972-5560 at the AmeriCares office in New Canaan, CT, if you can help us with this need. AmeriCares is a 501(c)3 organization. Gifts are tax-deductible.

Tax Software

Kiplinger's TaxCut 1997 Deluxe Multimedia

by Robert E. Rihn, CPA

I HAVE ALWAYS PREFERRED Kiplinger's TaxCut to TurboTax because of the numerous ways to enter data, myriad help commands, low cost, small file size, and its perfect electronic filing record.

Review last year's report

There are three main ways to enter data in TaxCut, and you do not have to enter any of the information directly onto an IRS form. You never have to enter the same information twice, since TaxCut does the calculation and carries the number to all the proper forms. You can answer TaxCut's clear and direct questions, and the forms are automatically filled for you—but we are jumping ahead of ourselves.

Perhaps the easiest and fastest way to enter data is pull up the Review of Last Year's Report. (See illustration, but ignore the overlapping Help Central window for now.)

Each line on the screen contains data, so it is not like an IRS form with a lot of superfluous text and wasted space. The screen is split vertically, with all your 1996 entries on the left. You merely enter your 1997 data in the center column using 1996 as a guide for consistency. Each field has its own Go To Form button in the right column that takes you directly to the appropriate line and form if you want to review it. You can then single-click back to the Review of Last Year's Report.

Q&A

If you want to be interviewed with the kinds of probing questions an accountant

would ask, use Question and Answer. The Q&A format splits the screen horizontally, so as you answer the questions in the top half you can see your entries carried to the form in the bottom half. TaxCut tracks and constantly displays your pertinent topics so you know which ones still remain. This Checklist allows you to jump to any topic and then continue with Q&A.

Shoebbox

If your knowledge of taxes is limited and the document in front of you incomprehensible, use TaxCut's Shoebbox feature. Shoebbox is analogous to you grabbing from a pile of similar-looking tax documents and not knowing which IRS

with its four context-sensitive tabs, each with its own scroll list of dozens of context-sensitive topics. Here is where you will find Kiplinger's tax tips, the IRS's official Instructions and Publications, as well as a detailed explanation of TaxCut's calculations.

Find pops up Rapid Find, which combines all searches in one place under 2,000 topics. Here you will find all of TaxCut's program helps, explanations, video tips, audio tips, IRS instructions, Kiplinger tips, and other information. For example, there are there are 16 sources of help under the main topic, "Withholding." Of course, you can also jump directly to the appropriate form from Rapid Find and then single-click back.

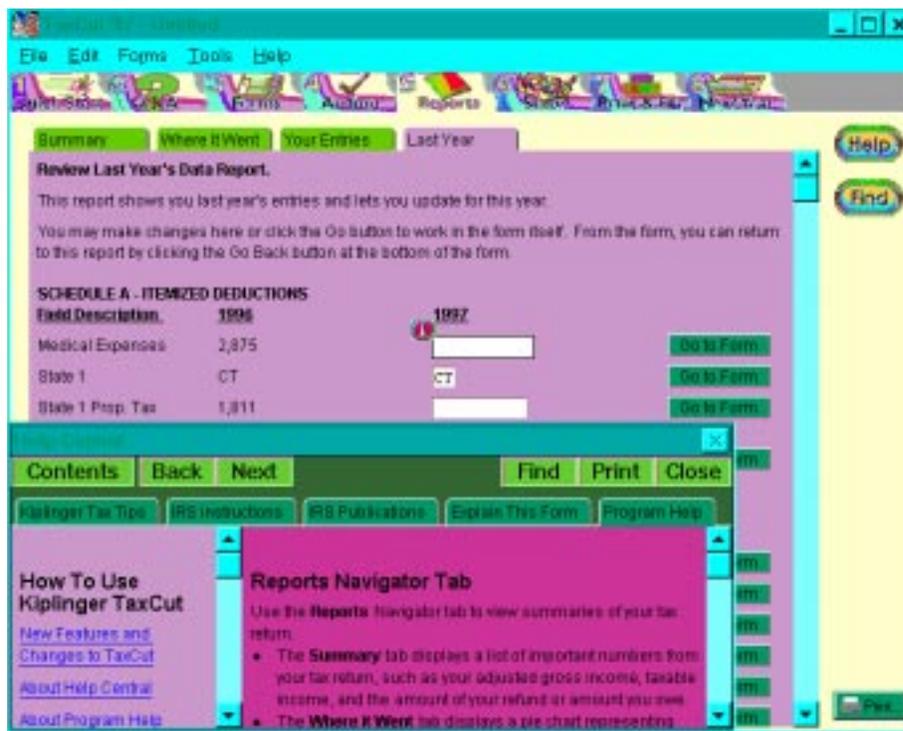
Navigation

Navigating through the tax return is easily accomplished with typical Windows menus, shortcut keys, and eight tabs. All of these methods are available at any time so you always know where you are and where you came from. Each field displays where your entries come from and go to. Single-click there, and then single-click back.

All federal and state forms are printed with any printer, and the tax fonts are downloaded automatically for perfect IRS duplication. There is no such thing as "IRS acceptable" forms like the ones TurboTax uses. Every form is an exact IRS duplicate.

Difficult topics made easy

The Earned Income Credit is a very difficult credit to calculate and one that affects many of us. TaxCut automatically computes this credit for you. You never even have to be asked EIC-specific questions. Even more difficult to compute is the Alternative Minimum Tax, which TaxCut has historically computed automatically and accurately. The program also provides a Depreciation Summary, which contains a recap of all depreciation schedules in the return, sorted and subtotaled by schedule. The



form to use to enter the data that's on it. TaxCut's Shoebbox will determine where to enter the data on the return by asking you simple-to-understand questions.

Multiple help

The Help and Find buttons you see in the illustration are always visible throughout TaxCut. Help presents Help Central,

individual Depreciation Schedules also display depreciation for all future years.

Minor Caveats

There could be more prompts and guidance from the program. For instance: the medical Q&A asks you only two questions and expects you to know that mileage to the doctor's office is deductible. TaxCut should also not allow you to leave a Q&A topic without a teaser. Lastly, state taxes paid during 1997 could be itemized deductions on the federal return or 1997 estimates on the state. TaxCut could make those entries easier.

Best Auditor

TaxCut's only worthy competitor is TurboTax, but TaxCut's audit and review features have always been more accurate and complete than TurboTax's. In fact, there are three levels to the auditor. It lists problems that must be corrected, warns of possible problem areas, and displays user-specific tips based on your entries.

Miscellaneous Features

TaxCut will import from Quicken for DOS and Windows, Microsoft Money, Managing Your Money for DOS and Windows, and any .TXF file. It comes with a nice review of tax law changes, a memo pad for odd notes, a pop-up calculator, a summary of your previous four tax returns, and the What-if Worksheet, which compares your 1997 entries to three scenarios. You just enter your data, choose a year from 1995 to 1999, and TaxCut will do the calculation. There are very few limits on the number of forms you can complete. In each field you are only a single-click away from a mini worksheet.

New this year is an online connection to TaxCut's home page for technical support, FAQs, updates, additional tips and planning, and links to other Internet sites. By the time you read this, TaxCut will also have incorporated BackWeb's push technology.

File electronically for free!

I highly recommend you file electronically and select the direct deposit option. You will be faxed an IRS acceptance letter two days after filing. Ten days later you can phone a special IRS electronic filing 800 number and within 60 seconds be told to expect to find your money by Friday. I guarantee your refund will be deposited by the time you wake up on Friday morning.

If the IRS owes you money, you will not have to worry about the post office losing your return or your refund check. If you owe the IRS, then print the 1040PC form for the IRS and print the normal form 1040 for your own records. Either way, electronic filing substantially lessens your chance being audited and totally eliminates your chance of getting an error notice from the IRS months later.

How much will electronic filing cost you? Nothing if you do it yourself, but your accountants will probably charge you about \$40 even though their cost is only the \$5 fee charged by the transmitter of the file. TaxCut dropped the \$9.95 charge it used to charge for filing your return electronically.

It pays to take advantage of TaxCut. The Federal Deluxe Multimedia version costs \$29.95, and all the state returns are on one CD for the price of a single state—\$24.95.

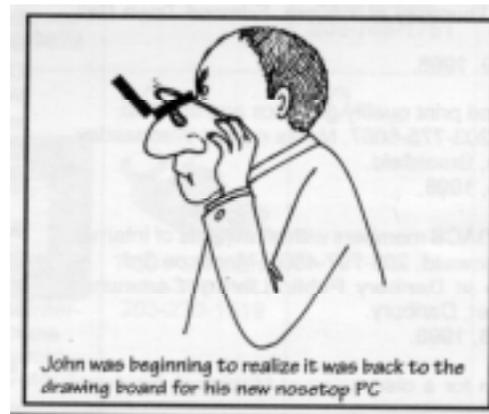
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Programmers wanted

Contact Systems designs, engineers, and manufacturers surface mount placement machinery. We are seeking programmers for Danbury, CT with 2+ years experience using Windows 95/NT operating system and experience with C, C++, WIN 32, Visual C++, MFC, ODBC. Visit our website.

Fax resume (203) 743-0606 or e-mail hr@contactsystems.com.

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Special Interest Groups

Access- Designs and implements solutions using Microsoft Access database management.

Contact: **Bruce Preston**, 203-431-2920. Meets on 2nd Tuesday at 7pm at AMSYS Computer, Ridgefield
Next Meeting: Feb 10, 1998.

Advanced Operating Systems - Studies using, exploiting and developing OS/2, BSD UNIX and NT operating systems.

Contact: **Don Pearson**, 914-669-9622.

Meets on Wednesday of the week following the General Meeting at 7:30pm at Don Pearson's house, North Salem, NY.
Next Meeting: Feb 11, 1998.

Desktop Publishing- Edits and produces *dacs.doc*. Anyone interested in the art of newsletter publishing is welcome.

Contact: **Allan Ostergren**, 860-210-0047 or **Marc Cohen** 203-775-1102. Meets on Thursday following monthly general meeting at 7pm at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.
Next meeting: Feb 5, 1998.

Education- Coordinates DACS education classes.

Contact: **Charlie Bovaird**, 203-792-7881. Meets as needed.

Financial - Discusses various investment strategies emphasizing careful selection to maximize profits and limit risk.

Contact: **Will Toll**, 203-270-1519, or **Paul Gehrett**, 203-426-8436. Meets on 3rd Thursday at 7:30pm. Edmond Town Hall, Newtown.

Next Meeting: Feb 19, 1998.

Graphics - Create and print quality graphics and images.

Contact: **Ken Graff**, 203-775-6667. Meets on last Wednesday at 7pm at Best Photo, Brookfield.
Next Meeting: Feb 25, 1998.

Internet - Acquaints DACS members with all aspects of Internet.

Contact: **Diane Greenwald**, 203-797-4505. Meets on 3rd Wednesday at 7pm at Danbury Public Library Community Room, 170 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: Feb 18, 1998.

Macintosh - A forum for a discussion of Macintosh hardware and software..

Contact: **Chris Salaz** 203-798-6417. Meets on 3rd Tuesday at 7:30pm. DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: Feb 17, 1998.

Visual Basic - Focuses on developing Windows applications.

Contact: **Chuck Fizer**, 203-798-9996 or **Jim Scheef**, 860-355-8001. Meets 1st Wednesday 7pm at DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: Feb 4, 1998.

Voice for Joanie - Provide and support people with Lou Gehrig's disease with special PC computer equipment.

Contact: **Shirley Fredlund**, 860-355-2611 x4517.
Meets on last Tuesday at 7:30pm. Datahr, Brookfield.
Next Meeting: Feb 24, 1998.

Wall Street - New Windows stock marketing software.

Contact: **Phil Dillaway**, 203-367-1202. Meets last Mondays, 7pm at A. G. Edwards office, 42 Old Ridgebury Road, Danbury.
Next Meeting: Feb 23, 1998.

Windows - Explores all phases of Windows 95 and 3.1.

Contact: **Ben Carnevale**, 203-748-1751. Meets on the 2nd Friday at 7pm at Senior Employment Center, 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: Feb 13, 1998. Register with Ben first.

Word Processing - Learn word-processing techniques.

Contact: **Vince Tichy**, 203-746-7690. Meets on 2nd Tuesday at 7:30pm at DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main, Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: Feb 10, 1998. Register with Vince first.

Additional SIG Notes

General

The SIG Notes and Calendar are available on the Internet on Dan McLeod's home page. Changes from the SIG Notes and Calendar printed in *dacs.doc* will be shown in *red* and *italics*. The Internet address for the SIG Notes and Calendar is: <http://www.concentric.net/~dwmcleod/signotes.htm>. Please type it precisely as shown and use only lower case. Comments on the Internet SIG Notes would be appreciated by E-mail at dwmcleod@concentric.net.

Internet

Topic for next meeting: "Rent, Buy, Sell: How the Internet Can Help You With Real Estate." Steve Schappert, broker/owner of Buyer's Trust Real Estate and founder of the Brookfield Information Center, will talk about the latest trends in real estate on the Web. The Internet SIG meets at the Danbury Public Library, 170 Main Street from 7 to 8:30 p.m, Wed. Feb. 18. For snow announcements, see www.danbury.org/internet.htm.

Contact Diane Greenwald, 797-4505 or dmg@danbury.lib.ct.us.

Macintosh

Will meet on the third Tuesday of each month. Topics for the rest of the first quarter: February 17 CAD on the Macintosh March 16 MacInTax (just in time for taxes!).

Visual Basic

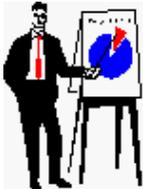
The January VB SIG meeting started with a random access discussion of such VB application programming issues as How container classes work, and Why does my user program cause a GPF when it is closed. We also discussed program installation sets generated by the installation wizard. VB 5 installation sets can break Win95's OLE capability because of conflicts in new DLLs and entries in the Registry. It would be a major developer "no-no" to put both VB 5 & VB 4 on the same platform.

After random access we continued the December project, working with API's and the screen capture program. Chuck Fizer presented an initial version of a screen capture program that captures the screen and then prints the result. The technical program flow was discussed, with much constructive input. Ideas for improvement were discussed, and many of them will be incorporated into the project, hopefully before the next meeting. One copy of the project file set was taken for home study and improvement.

At the February VB SIG meeting, the screen capture program will be presented with feature enhancements. We will also analyze the code and redistribute the project to anyone wanting to use it. Bring a floppy.

February 1998

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	 7:00 PM General Meeting: Danbury Hospital	 7:00 PM Visual Basic: Chuck Fizer 203-798-9996	 7:00 PM DTP: Allan Ostergren 860-210-0047	6	 NEWS LETTER DEADLINE
8	 7:30 PM DACS Directors Mtg	 7:30 PM Word Processing: Vince Tichy 203-746-7690	 7:30 PM Advanced Operating Systems: Don Pearson 914-669-9622	12	 7:00 PM Windows: Ben Carnevale 203-748-1751	 SIG NOTES DEADLINE
15	16	 7:30 PM Macintosh: Chris Salaz 203-798-6417	 7:00 PM Internet: Diane Greenwald 203-797-4505	 7:30 PM Financial: Will Toll 203-270-1519	20	21
22	 7:00 PM Wall St Phil Dillaway 203-367-1202	 7:30 PM Voice For Joanie: Shirley Fredlund 860-355-2611 x4517	 7:00 PM Graphics: Ken Graff 203-775-6667	26	27	28

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Calendar and SIG Notes are available on the Internet at <http://www.concentric.net/~dwmcleod/signotes.htm>

Shopping

Buying a second computer?

by Mike Kaltschnee

LIKE MOST of DACS readers, I constantly get asked at parties, supermarket, and family gatherings for advice on buying a computer. So I've decided to help you out by writing an article you can hand to the someone who's asked you for advice, or if you are the one looking, make some sense of the confusing assortment of computers available today.

My dad, who finally caught the computer bug, decided he wanted a new "state-of-the-art" model. He used to get my old computers, starting with an Apple][e when I bought my first PC. He started using it for business, and then got an old XT from me and used that until a few years ago. Not caught up in the speed race, the XT was fast enough to type letters (and still is in my opinion). Now schools and other organizations won't even take them as donations, so most of them wind up in landfills. His company bought him a color 486 notebook computer with sound, and he was hooked on Windows 95. It was downhill from there.

Dad has been yearning for a computer for a while, shopping for several months and learning such exotic computer jargon as "EDO RAM," "SCSI," "PCI Bus," and "X2." I'm not going to explain all of this stuff here, but if you want a great resource for all of your jargon- and computer-buying questions, check out <http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/newpc/>. What I'm going to do here is to try to share the advice I gave him, and to give you a few tips on things to look for when you go off to buy a computer.

Wait for price breaks!

First, I told my dad to wait, something unusual in the computer business. I always try to keep my hand on the "pulse" of the industry, and I knew that

there was going to be a huge price break at the beginning of the year. Sure enough, a few months after we broke the \$1,000 barrier for a new Pentium computer, we broke \$799. I wouldn't recommend one of these unless it was a second for the kids or if price was really a concern.

The reason I told him to wait was I knew that this would bring the prices of the higher-end computers down. Sure enough, the price break on the type of computer he was looking for was more than \$400—just by waiting a week. These price breaks tend to happen in the spring, around Spring Comdex, in summer during PC Expo, and during November, around Fall Comdex. The biggest breaks happen just after Christmas.

Even with computer prices breaking \$1,000 for a complete system with CD-ROM, printer, monitor, keyboard, mouse, 16MB of RAM, Windows 95, and a ton of software, you want to spend at least \$1,500. This is a break over my previous recommendation of \$2,000. My dad wound up spending around \$2,500, but he went for the 17-inch monitor, Pentium II, a three-year additional comprehensive service plan (total of four years), and video in/out support. He spent more than he expected but got a killer machine that should last him about two years (with upgrades) until he needs another.

One thing I tell everyone is to expect to buy a new computer every two years. No matter what you buy now, you'll wind up replacing it if you use it often. If you don't, you'll be able to get away with buying one every three years. If you have kids, you might even need to upgrade every 1.5 years (you can "hand down" the older computers

I tell everyone to expect to buy a new computer every two years.

Sure enough, the price break on the type of computer he was looking for was more than \$400—just by waiting a week.

to younger kids, like clothing). There is also the issue of what Windows 98 will require when it ships this summer.

To buy a computer today, you'll need to consider the following:

Processor: You can get a Pentium 166 computer for \$799, but it may not even run the current games. It'll process words fast enough, but if you can afford it, get yourself a Pentium II MMX (the MMX means it has the multimedia support you'll need) at the very least.

Monitor: Get a 17-inch one if you can afford it. The size difference is not only easier on your eyes, but you can do more things at once. The price difference should only be a couple of hundred dollars and is worth every penny in two years of reduced eyestrain.

RAM: Memory for your computer. You'll need at least 16MB but get 32MB if you can. It's not expensive to buy, but you may spend as much on the installation as the cost of the RAM. If you plan on using Windows NT, get 64MB.

Video: This is increasingly becoming the reason things run slowly. Windows requires a fast video card, and most of them now come with 4MB of RAM. Get a 3D graphics card if you can.

Hard Disk: The prices of these permanent storage devices are dropping so fast I can't keep up. Staples is selling a seven gigabyte hard drive for \$299. We paid several thousand dollars for a seven gigabyte drive about two years ago. Get at least two gigabytes, if not four or five. You'll need the space.

Software: Almost every computer comes bundled with free software. Forget the junk, look for Microsoft Office or Works. Make sure it comes with an encyclopedia, a game or two, and educational software if you have kids.

CD-ROM: The faster the better. Get a 20-speed or faster, and you'll appreciate the difference. Most software and games come on CD now, so you'll get a lot of use out of a fast drive and will save a lot of time.

Modem: Make sure you get a 56K modem, and make sure you can upgrade it

when the new standards come out. Get a US Robotics if you can (they've never failed me).

Brand: This is making more and more of a difference. I asked CompUSA what computers were being returned. I knew about Packard Bell but didn't expect to hear about Compaq (low-end models only). You can ask your friends, co-workers, and family about their experiences, too. I like HP and Sony on the low-end, and Dell, Micron, and Compaq on the high-end.

something will inevitably break or go awry.

Service Contracts: Get one. My dad bought Sony's because Even though he has a son for technical support, I'm not always around. he knows that something will inevitably break or go awry. Hard drives fail, monitors go fuzzy, and you'll make the couple of hundred dollars back the first time you call (just in lack of frustration).

Other things to beware of include restocking fees (ask, some are 15% of your purchase price!), deals that sound too good to be true (no free lunch in this business), and fly-by-night companies. This industry has been around long enough that if a company is really deceitful, they're long gone.

A few things to remember: Prices change so fast that you don't have to buy "today." Don't ever look back, the prices will drop next week (if you wait, you'll never buy a computer). Next, when you go shopping, bring a friend with you who knows computers to decipher what the salesperson is saying. And if you but a maching, be sure to pay by credit card so you have some recourse in case you get ripped off.

So that's the advice of dad's son, the computer expert. By the way, if you do get asked if you know anything about computers, you can always use my response: "Computers? No, I'm a sanitation engineer! Who told you that?"

MIKE KALTSCHNEE is a co-owner of DeMorgan Industries Corp., the leading developer of Web graphics (<http://www.web.spice.com>), and also teaches Webmaster and Internet marketing classes at the Internet School in Naugatuck Valley Community Technology College. Contact Mike at: mikek@demorgan.com.

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Internet Security

Am I Safe Surfing the Internet?

By Mike Kaltschnee

When I was asked to write about Internet “cookies,” I figured that people were getting concerned about Internet security. I teach the Webmaster program at Naugatuck Valley Community Technical College, where we spend quite a bit of time talking about how to protect your Web server, but nobody really explains how to protect yourself while surfing? I did *not* intend this article to be scary in any way. I surf regularly and just don’t worry about it, but I always take a few quick precautions beforehand.

Surfing the Internet is really very safe. The statistics are with you: 40 million people are on the Internet—a as many as four or five million may be online at any one time—and unless you call attention to yourself, no one may even know that you’re online.

Chats & newsgroups

Chat groups and newsgroups are another story. If you participate in either of these, you can make enemies. If you respond in a way someone doesn’t like, the person may start harassing you in new and unusual ways. They can send you e-mail, hundreds a second, that will fill up your mailbox. They can complain about you and get your account cancelled (it’s hard to prove or disprove things on the Internet, and for fear of being sued, most ISP’s will cancel accounts). If they are really savvy about how things work, they could cause even more trouble, but the odds of that happening are small. Avoid flaming (causing trouble for the sake of argument only in a chat room or newsgroup), and you’ll save yourself a lot of trouble.

Cable ISP security

Some of my students who live in the greater Hartford area have cable modems.

They are cheap, fast, and billed right on your cable bill (I hate paying too many bills). But, since they are new, they are causing new security problems. When you install your Internet software, you are installing network software for TCP/IP (the way computers talk over the Internet). The Internet is really just a big network, and your computer is actually part of it. Most people have never used the “sharing” ability of Windows 95 and don’t realize they have to turn it off. If

you don’t turn it off, you’ll have the same experience as one of my students: He was able to surf not only the Internet, but his neighbor’s computers as well. He could see everything on their hard disks. Microsoft acknowledges that this is a bug, and even posts a

workaround. You have to turn off “File and Print” sharing by selecting the Start button, Control Panel, and Network. Click on the “File & Print Sharing” button. Then turn off the ability to share files. You should do this even if you have a regular modem, but don’t if you have a network (e-mail me for instructions if you have questions).

Internet cookies

Internet cookies have no calories, but can be a problem in other ways. Cookies are files that a Web site can store on your local hard disk, and are mostly used to keep track of such things as your password, name, and preferences. They can be handy (you don’t have to enter your password to the *New York Times* every time you log on, for instance), and they can tailor the advertising to your preferences.

The most common use of a cookie is in an electronic shopping cart, where the cookie is used to keep track of your purchases. Don’t worry, a cookie cannot contain a virus, be read by any other Web

site, or used to see where you’ve been (that can be done without a cookie). Most cookies only contain an encrypted user ID number, useless except to the Web site that generated it. If you want to turn off your cookies, see the help in your Web browser for detailed instructions. I have gone from turning them off, to leaving them on. But I think they are safe and not worth the hassle of turning off. If you feel uncomfortable with the concept, however, just turn them off.

Hackers & Scams

I think the biggest threat to user security comes from humans (“Wetware”) rather than computers. The best hackers have always been masters of “social engineering,” able to BS their way past anyone. A famous scam was recently run from someone claiming to be from Yahoo asking for credit card numbers. Another great scam involved AOL. Someone claiming to be from administration asks for your user name and password. It got so bad that AOL had to warn users constantly that their staff would never ask you for this information.

The best way to protect yourself from scammers is to first think carefully about what someone asks you, and if it appears wrong, call the source and verify the request over a phone line (but call the main number, not the one on the e-mail).

I can see yours

The final security issue I’ll talk about this month is a “I Can See Your Hard Disk” trick that’s going around. You’ll be surfing innocently and press a button, only to be presented with the contents of your own hard disk. Don’t worry, the site can’t read the contents of your local hard disk. All they are doing is telling the browser to load your local directory into a window. I was a little unnerved the first time I saw it, but I assure you it’s a perfectly harmless but neat trick.

After all of this, I think I’m going to log off and go out and shovel the new snow. I hope I didn’t scare you off of the Internet, but it really is safe. Just be careful walking down those “dark alleys” at night, and use your common sense.

MIKE KALTSCHNEE is a co-owner of DeMorgan Industries, the leading developer of Web graphics (<http://www.webspice.com>), and also teaches Webmaster and Internet marketing classes at the Internet School in Naugatuck Valley Community Technology College. You can reach Mike at: mikek@demorgan.com.



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at the Danbury Library

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Post Your Resume on the Internet

The Internet SIG is planning to provide DACS members with the ability to post resumes at our Web site. Resumes will be posted either in plain text or in HTML formats. It will be your responsibility to prepare the resume for posting, send it electronically, and notify us of change in status. The process for doing this is being developed. In the meantime, we would like to get an estimate of how many would be participating. If you are interested, be sure to send a note to Pat Jennings: JPGF34A@PRODIGY.COM, or call him at 740-2351.

Random Access

Instant replay: January 1998

Bruce Preston, Moderator

Q. I have a Mac 3400C running System 8 and AOL 3.0 that freezes if it fails to connect to AOL on the second phone-call attempt. To get the machine running again, I have to re-install AOL 3.0. Numerous calls to AOL have not helped, except for one call, when I was told it was a known problem

A. Others who had observed the same problem had to roll back to AOL 2.6 or 2.7. In addition, the problem was observed under System 7 as well. Take a look at the O'Grady Powerbook page for further details.

Q. I run Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0. I used to disconnect by clicking on the connection icon and then click Disconnect. Now when I do that, I get a message saying "another service is using the modem." How do I disconnect?

A. You are clicking on the icon in the connections folder, which is trying to start another connection. You want to "wake up" the current connection, which has been reduced to a button on the task bar (usually at the bottom of the screen.) It will offer a disconnect button.

Q. I have installed a huge hard disk as a second drive on a machine running Windows 95. I copied the contents of the old drive to the new one. When the system starts, it reports in the Control Panel/System/Performance page that the drives are running in "DOS compatibility mode" or something like that. If I run the machine with just the new drive, it runs FAT-32. The jumpers on the drive get changed to Master and Slave as appropriate. Both drives are reported as FAT-32 when they are alone in the machine.

A. The general consensus was that you probably have both drives marked as "Active," which means that both are bootable. You should only have one drive in the machine marked as bootable. You can remove the bootable attribute with FDISK, without affecting the content of the drive. The other suggestion was that

since the new drive is working correctly when it's alone, remove the original one as was your original intent, FDISK and FORMAT it, and use it in the other machine.

Q. I have a P-100 with 256K L2 cache. Can I upgrade the cache to 512K?

A. Check with the motherboard manual to determine if the cache is in a socket, or if there's a socket for additional cache. It varies from motherboard model to model.

Q. I have a small business that I would like to sell via a "write an essay" contest. Is there a company on the Internet that could help me do this?

A. Do you intend to have your own Web site promoting the company? If so, you might look at <http://network.compuserve.com>, or <http://www.ibm.net> to see about hosting services. If you want a listing on an existing Web site, then you might do a search on "business for sale" using a search engine such as Yahoo! or AltaVista. Lastly, you might look in *Entrepreneur* magazine to see how others have put businesses up for sale.

Q. I need a 5.25" 1.2MB floppy disk drive that I can install in a machine so that I can read some old data diskettes. Does anyone have one for sale.

A. Several attendees got into a bidding war during the break.

Q. When I run PowerPoint 7 and I select the Organizational Charts template, I get an error message that says that it cannot find the template on the server. This is the only wizard that doesn't work. There is no file server.

A. Your installation is configured such that it thinks the particular template is in a "shared folder" on a file server. This is usually done in corporate installations to conserve space. Since there is no server, it can't find the file. You will have to reinstall specifying that you are not performing a server installation.

Q. Can anyone recommend software that will let my notebook access files on my desktop computer via a telephone link?

A. LapLink for Windows got most of the recommendations. There is a Windows 3.1 version and a version for 32-bit Windows (95 and NT). Other products mentioned were pcAnywhere, CarbonCopy, and the Windows 95 RAS. (RAS usually requires Windows NT, so it is a less likely choice.)

Q. I have a parallel port to which I want to connect several devices, such as a printer, a SNAPPY image capture device, a ZIP drive, etc. I know that I have options such as "Smart Switches," A/B boxes, etc.

A. First, beware of your total cable length: Two feet is the maximum for reliable operation. For a ZIP drive, you will get considerably better performance if you install a SCSI card and attach the ZIP drive there. (The ZIP Plus will auto-detect whether it is connected to a SCSI or a parallel drive, so you can connect the drive to a notebook as well.) If you decide to go with just the parallel configuration, then you might look into getting a second parallel for a few dollars. You will need to have an available ISA slot and an available IRQ.

Q. What is the advantage of a 32X CD-ROM drive over an 8, 12, 16, etc.

A. There are very few applications in which the extra speed would make a noticeable difference. You would notice the difference in applications like an Encyclopedia or MS TechNet that allow you to do text searches. For video applications, the current industry standard for mastering is a 4X drive—which means that there are enough video frames that they will be delivered by a 4X drive without the need to drop frames. If the video is mastered with additional frames, then some of them would be dropped by a 4X (or slower) drive so as to maintain "real time" display and remain synchronized with the sound.

BRUCE PRESTON is president of West Mountain Systems, a consultancy in Ridgfield that specializes in database applications. He is a member of the Board of Directors of DACS and leads the Microsoft Access Special Interest Group.

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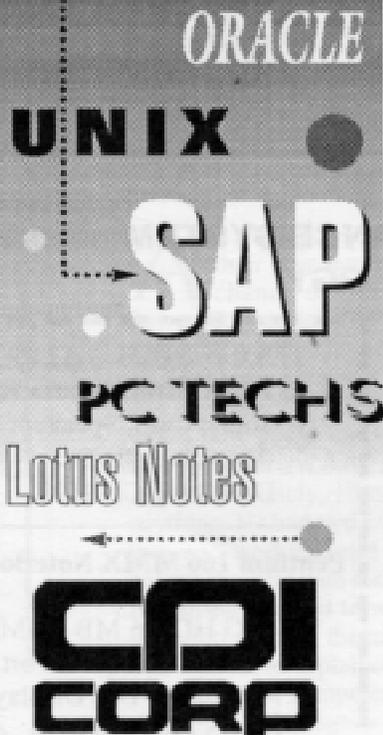
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