



March 1999

Volume 10, Issue 3

<http://www.dacs.org>

Microsoft Office 2000

Um, it's the Web, stupid!

AS THE YEAR 2000 gets closer, more people are interested in software that will be used in the future. On March 2 the Danbury Area Computer Society will present a program that will launch computer users into the next millennium.

Microsoft Office 2000 is the newest version of the popular suite. Office 2000 will go beyond desktop productivity and extend to the Web. Office 2000 offers new ways to use the Web in order to collaborate on information more effectively.

Come and see some of the features that will be available with Microsoft Office 2000:

- **Universal Document Viewing.** With Office 2000, you can save Office documents in HTML file format and retain the fidelity of a native Office file format. By saving as HTML, anyone with a Web browser can view your documents. Editing those documents is not a problem either because Office 2000 allows "rounding trip" them back into the original Office program without losing any of the rich functionality of the Office file formats.

- **Save to the Web.** Office 2000 also simplifies publishing your Office documents to an Intranet or to an Internet site. New File Open and File Save dialog boxes make saving documents to a Web server as easy as saving them to the hard disk or to a file server.

- **Web Themes.** Business users are now creating Web pages to serve many purposes on the Internet or for a team's Intranet. To make this easier, over 30 new design themes have introduced in Office 2000. These themes come with graphical backgrounds, bullets, and other design elements that make creating Web pages in Office as straightforward as creating documents.

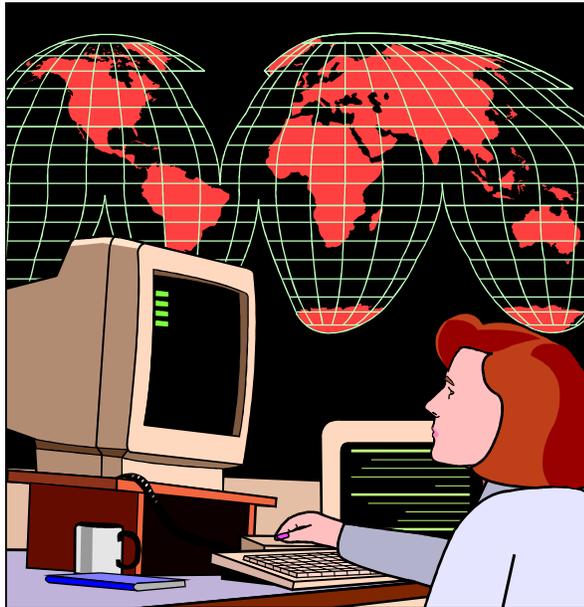
DACS is a computer user group of the Greater Danbury area. General meetings take place the first Tues-

day of the month at the Danbury Hospital auditorium, 24 Hospital Avenue, and are open to the public. Meetings start at 6:30 p.m. with casual networking. At 7 p.m. members ask their most pressing computer questions during Random Access. The featured presentation starts at 8 p.m.

DACS members include beginners, intermediates, and expert users. Special Interest Groups cover specific computer topics from Web-page building to Windows and Macintosh and meet throughout the month. Check the SIG calendar in this issue or on the DACS Website (<http://www.dacs.org>). You can also reach DACS at 203-748-4330. Coming in April: Jask Software presenting Paint Shop.

— MARLENE GABEREL

Please note that due to a scheduling conflict with Danbury Hospital, the March general meeting will be held at the Ethan Allen Inn, 21 Lake Avenue Extension, Danbury.



Directions Ethan Allen Inn Exit 4 off I-84

From New York: I-95 North to Route 287 to Route 684 North to Route I-84 East. Exit 4. Right at light.

From New Jersey: Garden State Parkway to New York State Thruway East. To Tappan Zee Bridge. To Route 287. Follow above.

From Hartford: Route I-84 West to Exit 4. Right at light.

From Lower Fairfield Cty.: I-95 to Exit 15 Route 7 North. Follow through Ridgefield to Danbury. Get on I-84 East to Exit 4. Right at light.

President's File

DACS members who read the Danbury *News-Times* may be familiar with a full-page Online section which appears at the back of each Tuesday edition. This section has been devoted to information on computers and the Internet, and gets much of its content from the *Chicago Tribune* and other syndicated sources. Beginning on March 3, the *News-Times* will revamp its editorial structure, move the high-tech page to Wednesday's section B-1, and add locally generated content to its features. And part of that local content will be a weekly column hosted by DACS.

The Q&A column will be researched and written by a team from DACS under the supervision of *News-Times* business editor, Mark Langlois, and will be modeled on the longstanding Random Access column published each month in *dacs.doc*. DACS chairman, Wally David, will head up a select team of experts, including Bruce Preston, Ed Heere, and Jeff Setaro, and with informed input from other volunteers within our society. The *News-Times* has begun promoting the column and will ask its readers to send in questions. Anyone who would like to add their expertise to the effort should contact Wally at wallydavid@myself.com, or pull him aside at a DACS meeting.

We on the board are all excited by this opportunity to share DACS' communal knowledge with the *News-Times*' readership, and look forward to adding many new members through this column. We encour-

age our members to support this effort of the *News-Times* to add local content to their pages and to provide timely and relevant information to their readers.

People helping people

The initiative with the *News-Times* underscores a primary commitment of DACS—people helping people. Why do user groups matter? Perhaps a brief allegory can explain:

As the digital primordial soup began to coalesce into conglomerations resembling desktop computers, user groups were spawned to help bring some sense to the chaos. Then, as larger, more complex, artificial life forms began to take shape, these early PCs began to be taken over by parasitic infestations which gave them the means to explain themselves, perform more tasks, and communicate more clearly. Some even became so powerful that they began to gobble up one another, thus obviating the need to even explain themselves. With PCs taking on more and more tasks which seemed to need no explanation, user groups began to lose their role as intermediaries. But then these super PCs, and the infestations that inhabited them, developed the ability to reproduce and change their form and function virtually at will. Having eliminated most competing artificial life forms, they no longer needed to learn new tasks, and left it to others to explain what it was they did. To understand is to control, but even when confronted with knowledge and experience, these digital leviathans and their silicon-based hosts were able to transform themselves anew into slightly different and ever more complex variations of themselves, defying efforts to comprehend them.

Thus the user group became a permanent institution, dedicated to spreading information and understanding of the ever changing PC. This was accomplished through HelpLines, which allowed members to call one another to discuss specific problems; SIGs, which met to discuss the latest changes in computing; and Random Access, which enabled them to share knowledge with the general membership. In sum, all this led to fulfillment of the ancient prophecies: "Ask, and it shall be given," and "a manual shall come to thee!"

—ALLAN OSTERGREN
dacsprez@aol.com

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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).

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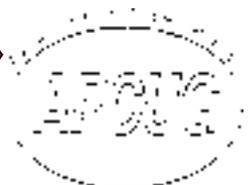
Technical Support

Dacs.doc is prepared using an AMSYS Pentium 133 and an HP LaserJet 4 Plus printer.

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Internet Access MAGS.NET
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Applications & Hardware to enhance *dacs.doc* are welcome.



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Web Site: <http://www.dacs.org>

HelpLine

Volunteers have offered to field members questions by phone. Please limit calls to the hours and topics indicated below. Days, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., evenings, 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Please be considerate of the volunteers and exhaust the vendor's manual or online help before calling them and have the configuration of your system and software version handy for reference. HelpLine is a free service, but please remember that many volunteers are professionals — their time is their living. If you are asked to pay for help or are solicited for sales, please contact the *dacs.doc* editor. If you have expertise in any hardware or software and wish to share it with fellow DACS members, call: **Larry Buoy at (860) 355-0394.**

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Windows 3.1/95/98	Ben Carnevale	(203) 748-1751	(de)
	Nick Strother	(203) 743-5667	(e)

Directors' Notes

The monthly meeting of the DACS Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on February 8, 1999. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, David, Gingras, Heere, Ostergren, Preston, Setaro, and Mrs. Gaberel. Also present, at the invitation of Ed Heere, was Eugene Callahan. Chairman David presided, and Secretary Buoy kept the records of the meeting. The minutes of the January 11 meeting were approved as corrected.

Finance & membership

Treasurer Charles Bovaird reported combined checking and postal balances of \$15,073.63, postage on hand of \$72.72, with no receivables or payables, for a total cash balance of \$15,146.35. He also reported current membership of 575.

Status of NT

Jeff Setaro reported that the Windows NT operating system was on hand and that he was waiting for CD-ROM versions (in lieu of downloading) of Service Packs before installing it on the Resource Center computer.

Chamber of Commerce

President Ostergren informed the Board that a planned visit from Stephen Bull, President of the Danbury Chamber of Commerce, had been postponed to Thursday, February 18, at 7:00 p.m., at the Chamber's office (39 West Street). Representatives of our Board will attend to discuss coordination of activities with the Chamber. Several Board members expressed willingness to attend.

Spring Y2K conference

Mr. Ostergren led a discussion on the progress of preparations for the Y2K conference in May. He asked for further suggestions for prospective panelists. Ed Heere agreed to preparation an agenda.

VFJ award

Mr. Ostergren suggested that, as previously discussed by the Board, a check to VFJ be given in the amount of the funds awarded (\$500) to DACS by APCUG's Jerry Awards for its support of the VFJ program. It was further suggested that said check be presented to Shirley Fredlund at the March 2 general meeting in conjunction with the Microsoft presentation. (Microsoft donated a direct gift to VFJ.)

Directors' Notes Continued on page 13

Meeting Review

DiskJockey takes on Microsoft Explorer

We love to create images

By Jack Corcoran

As the cattle industry developed in the 1800's, we created the enduring image of the Western hero, taking on the best of the worst, living the action, as epitomized by Gary Cooper in "High Noon".

As the information era develops, we are creating the legend of the computer hero, a brilliant innovator, starting from nothing, working out of a garage, creating computer products that are changing society forever. And we always picture our computer hero as scruffy, unattached, doing all-nighters in California, living on junk food, and, invariably, young.

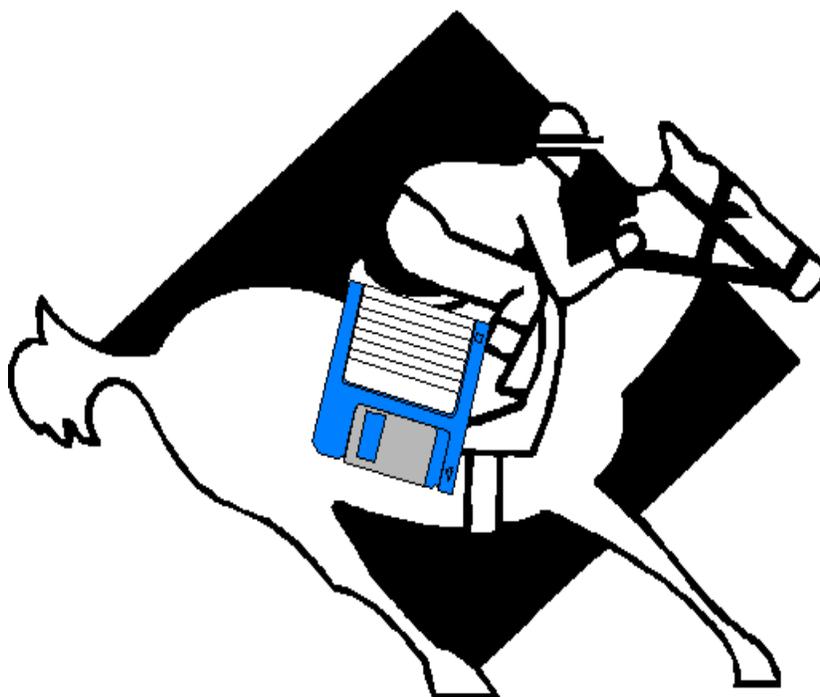
But are they all like that? The answer came loud and clear at our February DACS General Meeting, and it was a huge, up-beat, in-your-face, "No way, San Jose."

Tony Pereira worked 25 years at IBM. Starting from an Electrical Engineering background, he was a systems analyst, then moved into marketing where he was a major player in the OS/2 drama. When IBM was throwing away its high priced talent in the early 90s, it made him the offer too sweet to refuse.

The love of the action, however, was too much in Tony's blood for him to do the golf and community act. He set up a company in the basement of his home in West Simsbury CT (the New England winters rule out the garage). There he plunged back into the pure technology of the software art, C++, multi-threaded processes, multi-media file structure, and 5000 pages of

Microsoft documentation. Out of it all he created a user-oriented utility program that competes head-on with Windows Explorer, the heart of file management for Microsoft's operating systems.

Tony calls his product "DiskJockey 98". The name of his company is Clear&Simple



(www.clear-simple.com) and consists of himself, his wife and his eldest son. Tony does the system design and programming, as well as the marketing activities. Can DiskJockey 98 compete with the file management capabilities built into Windows and provided at no additional cost? The answer to that came at the end of our meeting, with a substantial part of the audience standing in line to buy the product. The price was \$25 user group special for the standard version, or \$50 for the Pro version which handles additional graphics files, for which Tony has to pay royalties in order to include their display engines.

DiskJockey 98 is a utility program for dealing with file clutter and runs on Windows 95, 98, and NT. It has the look and feel of Microsoft's Windows Explorer, but in addition to displaying the names and details of the files, DiskJockey 98 has an additional window that displays the contents. Anyone who regularly uses clip art or graphics inserts has accumulated a vast collection of .bmp, .jpg, .gif and others in multiple, scattered directories all over the place with cryptic names that are meaningless now. To be able to scan this jumble to find the right graphic for the occasion is well worth the price of admission. DJ also provides copy, delete, and transfer features a tad better than Windows Explorer. It includes a great Zip/Unzip capability and its JukeBox feature provides scanning and locating capabilities for sound files. Great features.

But as we all know, nothing in software always works as advertised. Some users have found that their resources are strained and more memory is required.

DJ is a good product. The speed at which it displays the graphics contents during scan mode is amazing. There are none of the two-second delays that discombobulate the attention span of the user. The interface is carefully crafted to help the user. Tony did it right. As our audience response demonstrated, people who can use its unique capabilities respond immediately. Can Tony succeed out there?

The sun blazes down on Silicon Valley from high above, hot and glaring. The stranger appears at the far end of Main Street and

slowly starts forward. There are hired guns on every side, rifles pointing from every rooftop, and the land baron looking down from his vantage point.

We watch from behind our secure doors and windows. We know we should-be out there. But the reasons we are not are too overwhelming. He is doing what we can only fantasize about. We watch the action on the street and in spite of the odds, we not only hope for him, but we also believe in him. He is so close to what might have been for us.

JACK CORCORAN is an old, retired computer programmer who could have and should have, but ...

Macinations

Is Apple Ready for Y2K?

By Chris Salaz

ABSOLUTELY! Since the introduction of its first 128K Macintosh in 1984, Apple computers have been well able to handle the transition of the calendar year 1999-2000, through 2/6/2040 06:28:15 a.m.

If you are using a G3 Macintosh running MacOS 8, you are more than safe with a start date of 30,081 B.C. that extends to 29,940 A.D. And if your third-party applications use the Mac OS Toolbox calls properly, you will have no trouble with most applications that run on the Macintosh. Says Apple: "Any Mac OS application that makes correct use of the Mac OS Toolbox for time and date functions will be Year 2000 compliant."

Apple's official Year 2000 Compliance Statement says it all. "A Year 2000-compliant product from Apple will not produce errors processing date data in connection with the year change from December 31, 1999, to January 1, 2000, when used with accurate date data in accordance with its documentation, provided all other products (e.g., other software, firmware and hardware) used with it properly exchange date data with the Apple product. A Year 2000 Compliant product from Apple will recognize the Year 2000 as a leap year."

I am a Mac user and am cross-platform knowledgeable. I am familiar with issues regarding Windows-based comput-

ers and the Year 2000 calendar year rollover, since I have been reading and researching the subject for a year or so.

If you use any third-party applications that are critical for your work, you will have to check with the vendors of those products regarding Y2K readiness.

Many times, users think only of their desktop computers and overlook the potential vulnerabilities presented by the phone system, electrical power grid, and other areas where the millenium bug could show its failure. Without electricity—we'll hope you remember how to play the harmonica with your friends for fun.

The projected \$600 billion cost to correct or offset the failure of date-sensitive computer systems is the first act; the next will be the litigation over the missed failures.

Reference Links used for this article include:

Apple General (<http://www.apple.com/about/year2000>), MacOS version specific (<http://www.apple.com/about/year2000/y2kos.html>), Information Week (<http://www.techweb.com/se/directlink.cgi?/wk19980525s0037>), and Microsoft (<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/year2k/>)

CHRIS SALAZ is a co-Leader of the Macintosh SIG. He also runs OneClick Computing.

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

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you need to renew your DACS membership—NOW!

New Members

01/18/1999 thru 02/13/1999

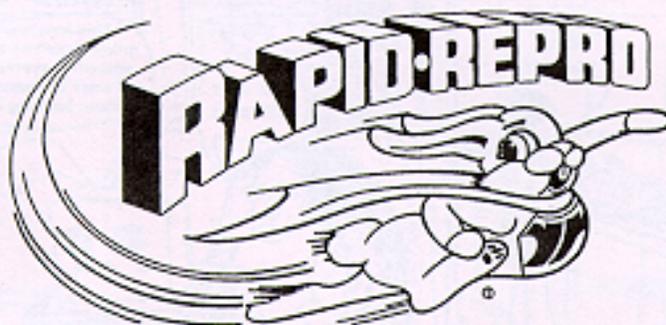
- 1) Alphonso Cameron
- 2) Dominick Lombardo
- 3) Susan Oliver
- 4) Mary Clark Stambaugh
- 5) Donald Stump
- 6) James W. Wright

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
MAGS-NET	203-207-5695
EROL'S	888-463-7657
GTE INTERNETWORKING	800-927-3000
IBM/ADVANTIS	800-888-4103
INTERNET84	203-830-2122
INTERRAMP/PSI	800-827-7482
JAVANET	800 952-4638
LOCALNET / FAIRFIELD CT	203-425-3535
MCI	800-550-0927
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NETAXIS	203-969-0618
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Saved by Lost & Found

PowerQuest's newest recovers vanished files

By Bruce Preston

ABOUT a year ago, a casual acquaintance called up with a problem: His computer wouldn't boot; all he got was a "Boot device not found" message. No amount of fiddling in the shop could bring the drive back. His backup copies were out of date. Since it had his clients' data on the hard disk, he had to do something. He eventually overnighted the drive to a service on the West Coast that recovered the data to a CD. Cost? About \$800 and two days of not being able to get at the data. Yet this was still probably more cost-effective than finding and reentering all of the data.

A few weeks ago, I got a call from a friend who had a similar problem. His machine had a new 8GB hard drive as his boot drive with Windows 95 on it, his applications, and some data. The older, 1.2GB drive had been left in as a second drive, and it had the data for a genealogy research project on it. The trouble was that his machine was now reporting "Drive Not Found" and/or "Drive Not Ready" messages for the second drive.

You may remember the visit from PowerQuest at a recent DACS General Meeting. The primary product demonstrated was Partition Magic, which lets you reorganize your hard-disk partitions on the fly without reformatting and/or loss of data. I have been a Partition Magic user for several years, and probably as a result of having registered my copies I got an e-mail a little while ago introducing PowerQuest's latest product, Lost & Found.

If you don't read all of the text on the box or in the product description, you might think that Lost & Found is just another unerase program. Unerase programs date back to pre-Windows days. It was with such utility programs that publishers like Norton and Central Point became famous. Yes, Lost & Found has the ability to recover erased files (even when you use the DOS DEL command, which bypasses the Windows Recycle Bin).

You do not have to install Lost & Found before the file is erased. The program doesn't just "hide" a copy of the file as does the Windows Recycle Bin. Instead

it reconstructs the file from information left on the disk, with the minor exception that it has to ask you for the first character of the filename. This is because DOS replaces the first character of a deleted file's name with a nonprintable character when a file is deleted. That's not too big a price to pay. And if you haven't already written a lot of data to the drive, there is even a good chance that it can recover files on drives that have been formatted.

This is all well and good, but it doesn't put Lost & Found very far ahead of some of the other utilities out there. Where Lost & Found makes a giant leap is that it uses the same intimate knowledge of hard-disk structures that Partition Magic uses to get at data that would otherwise be inaccessible—such as would be the case when your computer doesn't even recognize that the disk exists!

My friend with the lost genealogy data is an example: His BIOS screen reported only his boot drive; we could not get the machine to even see the second drive. We changed cables. We put the drive in other machines. Nothing. We tried "AUTO" IDE identification. We put in manual entries that we had recorded when the drive was originally installed. (You do have that information stored somewhere, don't you?) But we still could not get at the drive. So we put the drive back in the original machine, put in the settings to have the BIOS do an "AUTO" detect, and then ran Lost & Found.

THE FIRST THING you need to know about Lost & Found is that it is a DOS program. You cannot run it under Windows anything. Some might say that this is also the secret to its success: It doesn't have to rely upon Windows to do anything, and it doesn't have to take anything for granted.

To run Lost & Found, you need to boot to the C> prompt (no, you can not just open up a DOS command prompt, you must boot to the C> prompt), then put the Lost & Found diskette in the A: drive, switch to A:, and type LF. That's the extent of the amount of DOS you need to know. By the way, since the program is a

DOS character-mode application, you won't see any screen shots in this review. I had no easy way to get them.

During the Initialization phase, Lost & Found will take a good look at your machine and report what it finds. It knows how to identify and repair IDE, EIDE, and SCSI devices. It reported the particulars for the primary drive, which was no big surprise. Smiles came up on our faces when it reported that it had found the second drive, complete with manufacturer, model, size, head count, etc. This brought us to a decision: We had to tell Lost & Found which drive had the problem and where we wanted it to put the recovered data.

About recovered data: You can deal with it in several ways. Probably the best option is to put it in a directory on another drive. Since the working, primary hard drive had a 2GB partition that was empty, we elected to put it there. Other options available were to put it in a compressed file on a different drive, including network drive, or work on a file-by-file basis and recover to floppy. With about 1GB of data to be recovered, we did not consider recovery to floppy.

After we told Lost & Found where to look and where to put things, we went on to Step 2: Drive Analysis. This phase works essentially like a big ScanDisk, only more so. It looks at each piece of the drive and figures out what is there. When it started, it almost immediately reported that it had found a 1.2GB drive with one partition and 437 directories/folders (two more, bigger smiles) and 13,830 files (two absolutely huge grins). It then said it would need about 20 minutes to complete the analysis. We went to the kitchen for a snack.

When we came back, we found that we were getting a lot of clicking from the drive and that Lost & Found was reporting that it had come across some "Sector not found" errors, and was retrying to reread the sector of the disk. After it failed a predefined number of attempts, it would move on to the next sector and resume, and update the estimated time to completion. Unfortunately, the estimated time to completion had grown to 845 days and 11 hours, which we decided was a bit much.

I noticed the number of the sector that Lost & Found was trying to read and did a quick calculation and determined that it now thought the drive was considerably larger than 1.2GB. We stopped the machine, rebooted and went into the BIOS. This time, the BIOS reported the correct

Lost & Found Continued on page 11

Special Interest Groups

ACCESS. Designs and implements solutions using Microsoft Access database management software.

Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920. Meets on 2nd Tuesday at 7p.m. at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next meeting: March 9.

ADVANCED OPERATING SYSTEMS. Explores and develops OS/2, BSD UNIX, and NT operating systems.

Contact: Don Pearson, 914 669-9622. Meets on Wednesday of the week following the general meeting, 7:30 p.m., at Don Pearson's office, North Salem, NY.

Next meeting: March 10.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING. Edits and produces *dacs.doc*. Anyone interested in newsletter publishing is welcome.

Contact: Allan Ostergren (860 210-0047) or Marc Cohen (203 775-1102). Meets on Thursday of the week following the general meeting, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next meeting: Unscheduled.

EDUCATION. Coordinates DACS education classes.

Contact: Charlie Bovaird (203 792-7881). Meets as needed.

GRAPHICS. Create/print high-quality graphics and images.

Contact: Ken Graff (203 775-6667). Meets on last Wednesday, 7p.m., at Best Photo, Brookfield.

Next Meeting: March 31.

INVESTMENT STRATEGIES. Discusses various investment strategies, emphasizing careful selection to maximize profits and limit risk.

Contact: Paul Gehrett (203 426-8436). Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Edmond Town Hall, Newtown.

Next Meeting: March 18.

INTERNET. Acquaints DACS members with the Internet.

Contact: Larry Stevens (LStevens@usa.net) or Richard Koser (rkoser@worldnet.att.net). Meets on 3rd Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: March 17.

MACINTOSH. Discusses Macintosh hardware and software.

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

Next Meeting: March 16.

VISUAL BASIC. Develops Windows apps with Visual Basic.

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

Next Meeting: March 3.

VOICE FOR JOANIE. Provides and supports people with Lou Gehrig's disease with special PC computer equipment.

Contact: Shirley Fredlund (860 355-2611) x4517. Meets last Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Datahr, Brookfield.

Next Meeting: March 30.

WALL STREET. Examines Windows stock market software.

Contact: Phil Dilloway (203 367-1202). Meets on last Monday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level).

Next Meeting: March 29.

WEBSITE DESIGN. Designs and maintains the DACS Web site.

Contact: Jeff Setaro (203 748-6748). Meets on 2nd Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: March 10.

WINDOWS. Explores all aspects of Windows 95 and 3.1.

Contact: Ben Carnevale (203 748-1751 or e-mail W1VZT@aol.com). Meets on 1st Friday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street.

Next Meeting: March 5.

SIG News

The SIG Notes and Calendar are posted on the DACS Web site at <http://www.dacs.org>.

GRAPHICS

The Graphic SIG is looking for new members of any skill level. Call Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 for any additional information.

INTERNET

In February the Internet SIG surfed the heavens—earth to heaven, heaven to heaven, and heaven to earth. March's topic will "Broadband Field Trip." The Internet SIG will meet at the Charter Communications offices at 11 Commerce Street in Newtown on March 17th at 7 PM for a demonstration of cable modems. Several local communities already have access to this high-speed Internet connection, and this is a chance to see the future for the rest of us. Charter will demonstrate the technology and discuss pricing. Send e-mail to lsteven@usa.net or call 203 775-8655 if you are interested in attending so we can set up a room of the proper size. Upcoming topics include "Earthly Library Resources" and "How Do Bytes Get From Here to There?"

VISUAL BASIC

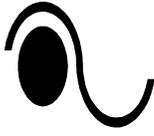
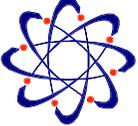
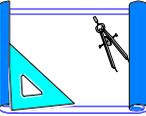
The February meeting was devoted almost totally to Random Access. Questions and discussion ranged from the difficulty of setting up a company Website to the fundamental differences between the various data access technologies offered by Microsoft (DAO, RDO, ADO, ODBC) with much in-between. The abbreviated program was a discussion of one of Jim's projects and how the user interface has affected common code routines used throughout the application. See you at the next meeting.

WINDOWS

The structure of the SIG meetings will be same as in the past: question and answer periods and hands-on work with the computer to re-create situations experienced by individuals for group discussion. It's a fun group and an excellent learning experience for both beginner and experienced users of the Windows 95 system. Will all old and new members please contact Ben at 203 748-1751 or W1VZT@aol.com before attending.

March 1999

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																		
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Calendar and SIG Notes are available on the Internet at <http://www.dacs.org>

Authentic Communication

Teacher-Student Communication via the Internet

By Jacqueline Renee Cohen

'hi Ms Cohen, it is Billy Chan from class 4N' 'Hello Billy.' 'What you do now?' 'Right now, I am using ICQ to talk with you!'

An average class in the USA, has about 25-30 students. A teacher might have 5 or 6 different 45 minute classes a day. This leaves less than 2 minutes per student per day. In Hong Kong where I teach the English language at a secondary school, the school has 1200 students and 53 teachers. I see 132 uniformed students on a regular basis in three classes of 44 students each. It is very difficult to find the time to speak with every student, and on the other side, not every student wished to speak to their language teacher in person.

In teaching the English language, my responsibilities include not only to prepare my students for their very competitive public exams, but to teach them how to communicate in English. Communication can take many forms. In a traditional language class the different types of communication might include formal oral, formal written (letters, compositions), reading, etc... In today's world the Internet has opened up new facets of communication, via e-mail, ICQ and chat rooms.

All of my students have my e-mail address and ICQ number. Out of my 132 students, I receive e-mails from about 15 of them on a regular basis. I also have received e-mail's from about 5 other students in the school.

The students whom send me e-mail or contact me via ICQ, are not always the most outgoing student in the class - quite often it is the opposite, the quiet shy student whom never speaks to me in the corridor or speaks up in the classroom. E-mail allows these students to communicate with their foreign teacher in English at their own pace and without pressure. I have received e-mails which ask me questions, tell me stories, link me to web sites (including one dedicated to 'Kenny' of South Park), clarify the homework and ask me grammar and usage questions. Interestingly, after many e-mail or ICQ communications, these students tend to open up more in the classroom.

I reply to each e-mail I receive, and try to build a rapport with the student. I never outright correct grammatical errors, although I might rephrase a question in my answer - such as "When will you live Hong Kong?" "I do not know when I plan to leave Hong Kong" The main purpose of using the Internet to communicate with my students is for them to realize that the primary purpose of English is communication and not passing exams. This type of communication is 'authentic communication'.

Authentic communication refers to communication that is practical, genuine and has a purpose. Formal teacher-student communications are guided by a set of socio-linguistic rules - by using e-mail those rules are discarded, informal English is used for genuine communication. E-mail has added another dimension to communication, and for students (especially of a second language) it can often be a more relaxed, less stressful and more personal way to contact their teacher. Especially for these students, grammar becomes less important and the 'idea' becomes more important.

The above all refers to informal communications. E-mail can also be used for formal teacher-student communications - as is being seen across university campuses in the USA. Course syllabi being available on line, compositions submitted by e-mail and notes from teachers going out to the students. While this is all useful and innovative - it is just an electronic advancement of traditional teacher-student communications and not 'authentic communication'.

Not just language teachers can access the Internet for affective communication with their students. Teachers, by making themselves available through the Internet, open another door through which a young person can approach a responsible adult. Often students need someone to listen or to ask advice - a teacher can help by responding to their e-mail and pointing them in the right direction - or just by showing they care by responding at all. It might seem like a dangerous idea for a teacher to give her e-mail to all of her students - but of 132 students, only 15 contact me

regularly. Only a small percent of students will access such a medium. It is widely recognized that there are very distinct learning styles - some people are more aural, kisthetic or visual. Just as some students prefer to talk to a teacher in the hallway. In the classroom, via the Internet or most often, not at all.

JACQUELINE RENEE COHEN teaches English as a Foreign Language at Cognitio College in Hong Kong and is trying to integrate Internet technology into her lessons. E-mail Jacqueline at JAQATAC@iname.com. Watch for more news from Hong Kong in the coming issues of dacs.doc.

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Lost & Found*Continued from page 7*

number of tracks, heads, and cylinders, where before it had just listed that it would use AUTO detect mode. We started Lost & Found again, and it went to work on the drive again. This time it took less than 20 minutes to examine the drive, ran into only a few bad sectors, and proceeded to the next phase.

In the "Recovery" phase, Lost & Found reconstructed the directory and file structure from the bad drive, placing the results in the designated area on the good drive. Here is where we ran into mild disappointment #1: All of the files and directories are displayed in their DOS names, so you only get the 8.3 notation. It displayed the structure in a tree view, using color to indicate the probability that a file could be recovered. We were glad to see that everything looked good, with the exception of a lot of deleted files, which we didn't care about. To bring back a file, you click on it. The prospect of clicking on all of those files wasn't too exciting, but you can also click on a folder to select all of the files in the folder. And you can select everything with a single press of the F2

key. That's what we did. We then let it loose.

With a lot of rattling of both hard drives, Lost & Found went to work. It took about 40 minutes to bring back all but four files.

The last step was to reboot the machine into Windows 95 and then execute a batch file that Lost & Found created for us. This file restored the file names to their original "long name" values. Had we used one of the other options (e.g. restore to compressed file) we would have needed to use a utility provided on the second installation diskette to extract the requested file from the compressed image.

My friend started DiskJockey Pro and started browsing the directory structure within the location where we had Lost and Found place the recovered file. His word-processing files came up in the DJ viewer. His scanned images came up. All was well. We don't know what was wrong with the drive and probably never will. The drive is no longer in the machine: It is now serving as a paperweight on my friend's desk, reminding him to do backups.

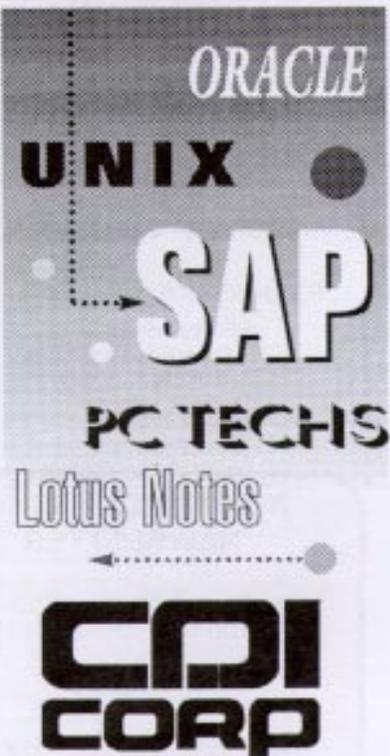
PowerQuest's literature says that Lost & Found will recover from damaged

drives, and/or if the file allocation table (FAT) is destroyed. The manual (44 pages, six of which are fine print legal stuff) is reasonably clear. But I would have liked a bit more elaborate overview of the process, since the documentation doesn't differentiate between what you have to do if you want to recover an erased file, a formatted drive, or a damaged drive.

You should be able to find Lost & found on your retailer's shelves right now for about \$60 or so. That's a lot better than paying \$800 to a recovery service. Lastly, before you decide that maybe you can go into the business of recovering data, you should know that PowerQuest has somehow set up Lost & Found so that it can only be installed onto one machine. I am going to guess that they somehow "brand" the diskette with something unique to your machine. I don't care. For product specifications, visit PowerQuest at www.powerquest.com.

BRUCE PRESTON is president of West Mountain Systems, a consultancy in Ridgefield, CT, specializing in database applications. He is a DACS director and moderates Random Access at general meetings and leads the Access SIG. Send questions to Bruce at askdacs@aol.com.

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DACS
MAR 99

How Computer Games Are Made From a Developers Point of View Part 2

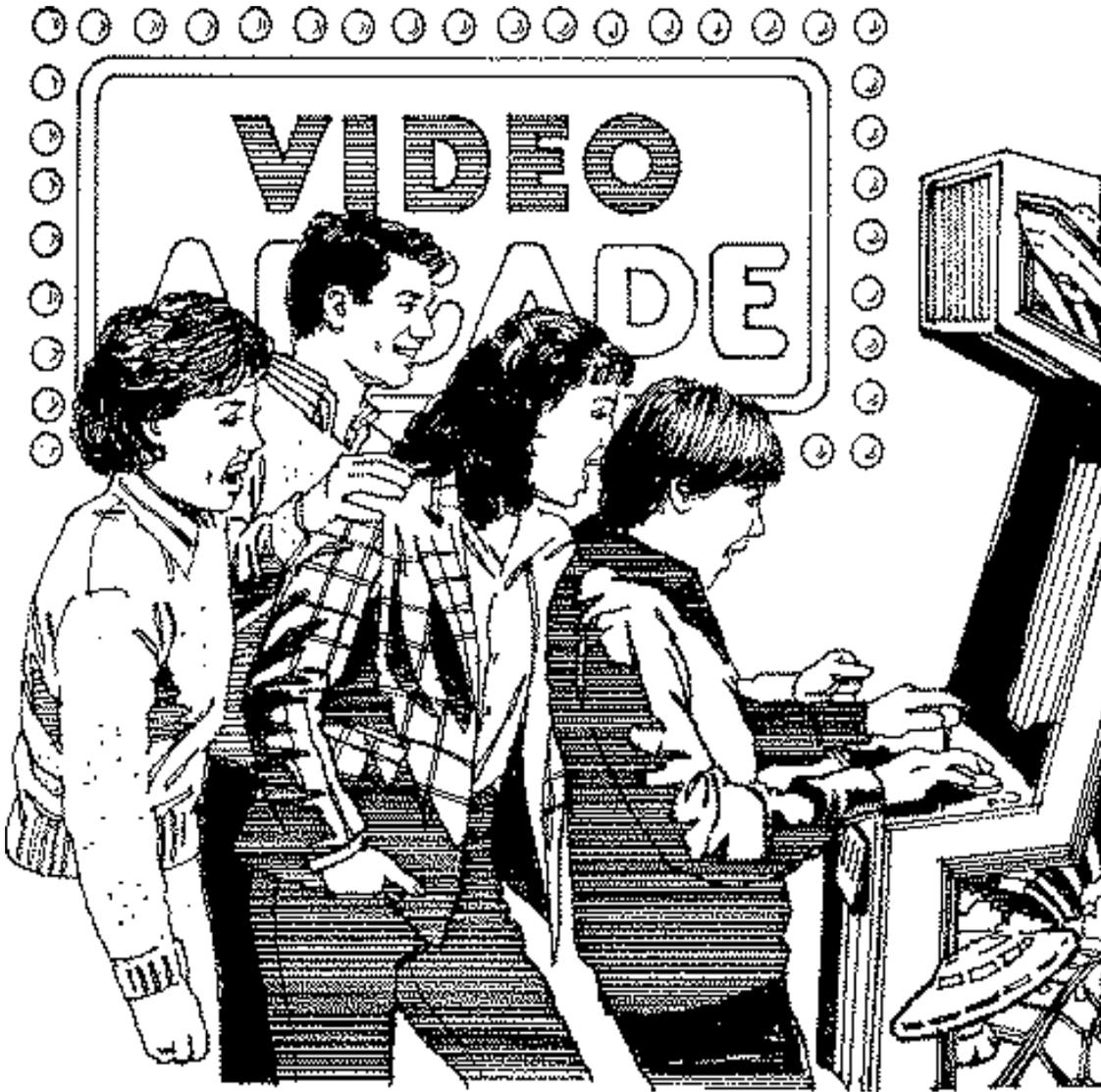
by James C. Smith

AS A GENERAL RULE, I don't like any games based on a popular movie or other existing product. There are some exceptions, but usually these games are just something a developer was forced to make even if they didn't like the concept. And the original concept usually isn't a unique game

play element. It is usually more like, "how can we take these characters, or this story, and put it into a video game." None of the most successful video games were based on a movie or other existing story or character. The most successful video game end up having movies, toys, and board games made based on the videogame.

Contract Developer's Idea

Another common game development process involves a developer coming up with their own original game concept. Most developers don't have the budget to support the full development cycle, so they need to sign a publisher to help fund the development. Even if the developer could afford to fund the full development cycle on their own, they still need a publisher to handle the manufacturing, marketing, and product placement. So, the developer will write up a game design, build a prototype, and start looking for a publisher. This is how most of the best games are made. The developers are excited about their game idea so they put more into it. Plus, it is an original concept rather than a video game version of an existing story. The end result is often a much better product. Unfortunately, it is very difficult for a developer to convince a publisher to publish a new game. The publisher would rather make a new version of some proven concept. A sequel to a successful game is less risky than a totally new game concept. Or a game base on Star Wars is easier to market than a game based on some new



characters no one has ever heard of. To make matters worse, the publisher receives dozens of game designs from dozens of game developers every month. It is very difficult for a developer to get noticed by a publisher and make his game design stand out compared to all the other options the publisher has.

Publisher has the control

There are hundreds of games released each year. Not very many are profitable, and a huge percentage of them are never even finished. Games are often canceled halfway through. So, a publisher is taking a big financial risk when they agree to publish a game. In exchange for taking that risk, they take most of the profits. And to help protect their investment, they take most of the control of the creative design process. So, no matter who came up with the original game idea, the publisher usually ends up with most of the control and most of the profits. Obviously, this can be very frustrating to a developer. Then again, I see this from a developer's point of view. I am sure a publisher would give you reasons why they feel like they have no real control, huge risk, and the bad end of the bargain.

Play our own game

There have been some games I played that I absolutely hated for one reason or another. Even though those games were not fun for me to play, I used to think that some one must like them. If no one else, at least the guy that made the game must like to play it. Right? Wrong! It turns out it is very common for the people making games to not like the game they are making. Their boss told them to make it because the marketing department said there was a demand in the market place for an xyz game. Some games are simply bad ideas, and all the people making the game know it, but they have to follow orders and do what the marketing department says to do. Even if the game is a good idea, it isn't necessarily going to be made by someone who likes that kind of game. Obviously someone has to write the games that 4-year-olds like to play and the 4-year-olds don't know how to program or model 3D artwork. A less extreme example is when a programmer or artist is assigned to work on a role playing game but he or she prefers to play action games. So, programmers and artists often have to work on a game they will never play themselves. This

can really hurt the developer's motivation and affect the overall quality of the game.

Milestone Schedules

Developers usually work on a milestone basis. Their contract says they get a check from the publisher each month only if they deliver an updated version of the game with specific features implemented. The game development process often turns into a push to simply meet the milestones on-time rather than trying to make the best game possible. As soon as feature X is good enough to meet the milestone requirements, the developer has to move on to the next feature so they can meet their next milestone. There is no incentive to make feature X a little better or a little more polished. Features Y and Z are waiting to be done and have payments attached to them. So don't spend any extra time on feature X once it is good enough. And don't even think about that extra feature that isn't in the contract but would make the game really cool. There is no time to work on features you don't get paid for no matter how cool they make the game. Of course, not all developers work this way, and royalties are one incentive the developer had to make the game better. But many game development companies are underfunded and must do whatever it takes to pay the bills. There simply isn't time to do a great job when a mediocre job is good enough. At least that is the way some short-sighted game development companies think. I no longer work for companies like that.

Making games is a very creative process. It is not unlike musicians writing and recording CDs. To get the best results, you need to let the creative people create, innovate, and take the time to make the product the best it can be. Contracts, milestone schedules, and budgets all get in the way of the creative process. But, in the real world all those things exist so we have to deal with them.

(To be continued in the next issue.)

JAMES C. SMITH, NOCCC, *Director, Software Engineering Reflexive Entertainment Inc.*, james@Reflexive.net

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Directors Notes Continued from page 3

After discussing adjunct activities and arrangements with the Ethan Allen Inn, a resolution was adopted to proceed.

HelpLine

A revised HelpLine listing for dacs.doc was reviewed, discussed, and, with some further revision, approved for inclusion in the newsletter.

ISP support renewed

Wally David advised that mags.net had reversed its decision to end free Internet access to DACS. The ISP will provide a new account and address, password protected, at no cost to us.

Computer for the Mac SIG

The Mac SIG has requested an iMac for use at the Resource Center. Following a discussion about its use, the Board agreed that President Ostergren will ask the Mac SIG leaders to work up a proposal for an acceptable used or new system that would meet their own needs as well as those of the newsletter committee for preparation of the newsletter and those of others interested in using the Mac.

News-Times tech Q&A

Mark Langlois, business editor of the *News-Times*, addressed the Board about his paper's plans to introduce on March 1 a weekly series of specialty pages devoted to high tech subjects. He said that a "Question and Answer" column had been proposed for each week, and that the Times would like DACS to organize a way to screen questions and provide answers. In promoting this feature before the initial appearance of the column, readers would be asked to submit questions to the paper, with the goal of stockpiling enough material to create an interesting department item. Promotion for the High Tech page and each Q&A feature would acknowledge DACS participation. President Ostergren proposed forming a committee of DACS members to screen the questions and pass them on to those qualified to provide answers. Chairman David agreed to form and manage this committee.

Member skill survey

Treasurer Bovaird announced that he had planned for a forthcoming survey of the interests and skills of the membership.

—LARRY BUOY

Random Access

Instant replay: February 1999

Bruce Preston, Moderator

DACS members who are unable to attend the Random Access at the monthly General Meeting are invited to e-mail questions to me at askdacs@aol.com. Your questions will be presented at the session.

Q. Ask Dacs: I have a P233/MMX with 64MB EDO, a 1GB HD, ATI All-in-Wonder PCI 8MB videoboard, 15" display, Windows 98, and Adobe Premier 4.2. All of the video capture/playback software included with the ATI card works. In Premier I can capture and save a video image to disk, but when I play the captured clip back I only get sound—the video is all black. I have checked the ATI Web site and followed their suggestions for how to deal with this problem, but it still doesn't work. Any suggestions?

A. Only one member of the audience had experience with the combination that you are using. The Premier software acts as a controlling application that asks the software that comes with the videoboard to display the video. It is probably a problem within the ATI software, or somehow the message to display the video isn't getting through. Your best bet is to continue with both Adobe and ATI in trying to find a resolution. Both products have enough of a following to provide you with a solution.

Q. I have installed a wireless network in my house. There are several Windows 98 machines and a Windows 95 notebook. The wireless network lets me move the notebook around the house and deck and still work. Everything worked fine until I tried to install a remote printer on the notebook, but now I can't do anything in the printer folder or in printer Properties without crashing. I cannot even delete a printer. Any suggestions?

A. Looks like the registry got hammered, or perhaps the printers applet in the control panel. In either case, you will probably have to reinstall Windows

95. If you are adventurous, you could try using RegEdit to delete portions of the registry that deal with the printers and see if that cures the problem. At worst case, you would still have to reinstall Windows 95. Before you use RegEdit, however, you may want to go to your Windows 95 CD and copy the two CFGBACK files to your C:\WINDOWS directory and then run CFGBACK. This is a utility that will make a copy of your registry files so that if you make an error using RegEdit (or install an application that causes a problem with the registry) you can restore the registry to its prior condition.

Q. I have Office 97. When I start Word 97, I get a message saying, "Microsoft Visual Basic Runtime Error 51—Word can not open this document." If I press OK, I can then continue. How do I get rid of this?

A. Further questioning found that the message seemed to be pointing at a dictionary file. It was suggested that you go to the Office SETUP utility and "remove" the dictionary option by going to "Remove/Reinstall Components." Then restart the machine, return to the Office SETUP utility, and reinstall the dictionary. It appears that the dictionary file got damaged.

Q. I have IBM Via Voice. When I start it, I get an MMSYS 296 error: "File cannot be played on this device. File may be corrupt, or incorrect format." I sent a message to IBM, who said "Get in touch with Microsoft; they are aware of the problem." I have sent messages to Microsoft, but they haven't gotten back to me. What next?

A. Go to the Microsoft Website, Support section, and do a search, perhaps using the keywords "Via Voice," "Codec," or "Sound Blaster." One of the members suggested that you may have an out-of-date Codec compression/decompression driver). If this is the case, you

should look for newer drivers for your sound card. Also consider downloading the Windows Media Player, since there are newer revisions of it available. You might also need the latest version of DirectX as well.

Q. If I select the "Save to File" option when I print, how do I then print the file at a later time?

A. This is a curious problem, since there is no "nice, clean" answer for what appears to be a very simple, basic question. If you double-click on the file or drag it, what usually happens is that Windows expects to start an application that will then convert it to printer instructions. The problem is that you get a printout of a file of printer instructions rather than the actual printout you have already generated.

One way that usually works is to open a DOS command window and use the COPY command. Assuming that the file is named "Printed to File.PRN," and that your printer is on port LPT1, you would type: COPY Printed to File.PRN LPT1: The quotes are needed if the filename is anything other than a "DOS legal" 8.3 filename, i.e. more than eight characters to the filename, or containing spaces, punctuation, etc. You may find it necessary to add the "/B" to the command, which says "Treat the file as binary data."

One more note: If you select Print to File, remember that the data that is written to the file is printer-specific. So if at print time you tell Windows that your printer is, say, an Epson color printer, but when you copy the file to the LPT port and there is, say, an HP LaserJet printer attached, you will get very odd results.

Q. Here is a strange problem. I was in Windows Explorer "Detail Mode," which gives the tabular list of files with names, sizes, type of file, and date modified. I went to "List Mode," which just displays the names of the files. When I returned to "Detail Mode" none of my files were visible. After a short panic, I returned to "List Mode" and they were visible again.

A. It turns out that a "Ctrl-minus" keystroke will make the column

widths 0, thus making the list invisible. A "Ctrl-plus" keystroke will make the column width take their default values, which you can then adjust to what you want. One user reported that using "Quick-Res" had caused this problem. Moderator's Note: I tried this in Windows 98, and couldn't reproduce the problem.

Q. I am running Windows 3.11. When I get a binary file attachment in CompuServe, I can't get at it.

A. The old CompuServe mail system couldn't handle binary files that came from a non-CompuServe source. You need the newer mail system, which is Internet compliant and understands the formats used by Internet systems. There are also some standalone utility programs such as DiskJockey, WinZIP, etc., which also understand the various formats used for transmitting files across the Internet.

Q. I run the "Microsoft System Information Report." It used to run about 12 pages, but I am now getting a file that is way too big to put on a diskette. What happened?

A. You are probably also getting a listing of the registry, which for a system with a lot of applications and devices can become huge. You may want to save it to the hard disk and then edit out the registry entries. Another possibility since you said "print to file" is that it is saving the "graphics" instructions for printing the report. Define a new printer, select "Generic" from the list of manufacturers, then "generic/text only" from the list of devices. If you then use this printer when you then "print to file" it will save just the ASCII printable text without all of the fonts and formatting etc.

Q. Could someone discuss the differences between the Celeron and the Pentium II?

A. The Celeron was Intel's response to the other CPU chip manufacturers who were producing lower-priced processors. Intel disabled the cache in the Pentium II processor, producing a processor at a much lower cost. It also produced a processor that runs measurably slower. In response to consumer complaints, the Celeron A350 chip

was introduced, which has a 128K cache. This improved the performance. Cache is a large memory buffer within the chip itself that lets the CPU read areas of recently accessed memory without having to go out to the relatively slower RAM.

Q. Has anyone "overclocked" a Celeron?

A. One member reported running Celeron A350s at 450MHz without problems.

Q. I am trying to compress data on an old hard drive. I was told that I need "Microsoft Plus" to do this. I can't find it.

A. This was an add-on product for Windows 95 that included a higher performance disk-compression utility (DriveSpace3) library, as well as more "desktop themes," sounds, graphics, etc. However, we do not recommend its use anymore, since the justification for it, costly media, no longer exists. You can get multigigabyte hard drives for less than \$200 at your local dealers and even at the large office supply stores. It is much more reliable to use a larger hard disk than to compress a drive. About the only justification for using disk compression software would be to get a little more usage out of an old notebook computer when you can't get a newer drive.

Q. But can I use a multigigabyte hard drive in Windows 95?

A. Yes, Windows 95 can use it. You will just have to have the drive "partitioned" into maximum of 2GB per logical hard drive. So if you have an 8GB hard drive, it would be seen as C:, D:, E:, and F:, each about 2GB. On an older machine, the BIOS won't recognize the drive, in which case you'll have to install BIOS overlay software. This software, which usually comes with the drive (such as "Max-Blast" which comes with Maxtor drives), will modify the BIOS at boot time so that the BIOS will see the full drive.

Q. Will the BIOS in my old Gateway machine recognize the drive?

A. It depends upon the age of the machine. If it is too old to recognize the larger drives, there is a good chance that it won't recognize Jan 1, 2000 either. There are several ways to handle it: If the BIOS is an EPROM (electronically programmable) then you may be able

to get a BIOS software revision from the vendor. If the BIOS is on a chip in a socket, then there are replacement chips available (it takes about ten minutes to replace the chip).

If the BIOS is not in a socket, then there is an ISA adapter board that can provide the BIOS modifications. Since there comes a point of diminishing returns, much depends upon how much you are willing to put into the machine.

For those of you who may want to keep your old machine going, you might try Unicore Software at www.unicore.com or 1-800-800-BIOS. Their BIOS replacements can support up to eight hard drives of 137GB each, are Y2K compliant, support PnP Windows 98 and faster CPUs, and eliminate overlay problems, especially for other operating systems such as Unix and Lynux. Replacing a socketed BIOS is roughly comparable in difficulty to replacing memory: You just need to use a provided tool to lift the old chip out of the socket. The cost for a BIOS chip is about \$70, plus your installation cost if you have someone do it for you.

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