



April 1999

Volume 10, Issue 4

<http://www.dacs.org>

EXPLORING PAINT SHOP PRO

Manipulate images and graphics with ease

DISCOVER what you can do with paint—not the real, liquid, messy kind you can blob on a linen canvas, but the virtual kind you can apply with a digital paintbrush on your computer display. The Danbury Area Computer Society will present JASC's Paint Shop Pro on April 6 at its general meeting at the Danbury Hospital auditorium. Come and see what you can create.

Paint Shop Pro, the leading producer of graphics and multimedia, is a painting and image-manipulation program that enables business and home users to manipulate images with ease of use, speed, and affordable functionality. The program features a complete collection of painting and selection tools and offers multiple layering options. It also permits image adjustments and enhancements as well as Web support and intuitive animation.

Paint Shop Pro efficiently creates and adds outstanding visual impact to any type of business document. It easily imports, enhances, and exports a wide range of pictures with a variety of digital imaging devices. It designs and produces dynamic, optimized Web graphics that stand out and get noticed. It also quickly opens, converts, and saves over 40 different types of graphic file formats.

DACS is the computer user group of the Greater Danbury area. Its general meetings are open to the public and take place the first Tuesday of each month at the Danbury Hospital auditorium, 24 Hospital Avenue. Meetings start at 6:30 p.m. with casual networking. At 7 p.m. members can ask their most

pressing computer questions during Random Access. The featured presentation starts at 8 p.m.

DACS members are beginner, intermediate, and expert users. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) covering specific topics from Web-page building to Windows and Macintosh meet throughout the month. Check the calendar on the DACS Website (<http://www.dacs.org>) or in the monthly newsletter, *dacs.doc*, for the dates, or contact a friendly SIG leader to find out about the topic for the next meeting. SIG meetings will answer many of your computer queries. You can also reach DACS by phone at 203 748-4330.

Coming on May 4: Y2K Up and Personal, How the Year 2000 bug will affect individuals? Attend this must event to find out how to protect yourself, your family, and your assets.

— *Marlène Gaberel*



President's File

At our April meeting, the DACS board of directors will go into closed session once again to elect a slate of officers for the coming year. Although our bylaws specify that the membership shall elect the board who will themselves choose their officers, it is not necessary that an officer also be a director. All members are eligible to serve, and we encourage all those who are active in DACS programs to volunteer for office.

The emphasis is on active. As a volunteer-intensive organization, our only job requirement is a commitment to serve, and all we can offer in return is psychic income. But it's that drive to achieve and the thrill of accomplishment that have made DACS a pioneer among user groups and a vital force in our community. So, come to our next meeting and volunteer for office. We are an equal opportunity employer and have been known to add an extra VP position for just the right person—you.

Y2K — It's back!

Mark your calendars for the fourth of May. That's when DACS will present its next Year 2000 conference, Y2K II. Moving beyond the issues of how we got into the Year 2000 mess and how government, institutions and big business are coping, this time DACS' own Ed Heere will lead a panel of experts focusing on how the individual PC user and

small-business entrepreneur can prepare.

Panelists already confirmed include Lori Scott, Y2K coordinator for Danbury Hospital; Tom McIntyre, former president of DACS and an investment manager; Bob Mitchell of the Connecticut Year 2000 Office; and Mary Beth Rippert, a corporate personnel consultant and expert on employment issues in the Millennium.

Members P.O'd over late delivery

An e-mail survey by DACS treasurer, Charlie Bovaird, showed that as of March 10 only a fifth of our members had received their newsletters. The newsletter is sent out by presorted standard mail (formerly third class), at a rate of about 16 cents each. It is delivered to the Danbury Post Office and then forwarded to Stamford for processing prior to going to designated local Post Offices. Under normal conditions, mail should have a maximum stopover of three days at each point and reach its destination within nine days. It is suspected that the automatic processing equipment is breaking down, but postal officials are mum on the reasons.

An obvious alternative would be to send *dacs.doc* out by first-class mail, but this could add about 50 cents to each piece and as much as \$5 a year to membership dues. If you are regularly receiving the newsletter after the General Meeting, you might want to download a copy from our Website. Articles and the calendar from each issue are routinely uploaded to *dacs.org* two weeks prior to the meeting, and a PDF version of the complete newsletter is posted about a week later. We are also considering sending an attached copy of the calendar and the next-meeting announcement as an attachment directly to our member e-mail list.

Got some ideas? Send me an e-mail to let me know what you think. In the meantime, you might drop your local postmaster a line care of your local 4-digit zip code, and ask why your copy of *dacs.doc* takes so long to get to your mailbox.

—ALLAN OSTERGREN
dacsprez@aol.com

Membership Information

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The editors welcome submissions from DACS members. Contact Frances Owles 860-868-0077 (jones@ct1.nai.net) or Allan Ostergren at 860-210-0047 (dacseditor@aol.com). Advertisers, contact Brad Altland at 203-357-407; (BBA3@exchange.co.westchester.ny.usa).

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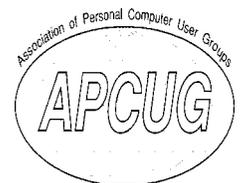
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HelpLine

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?

d = day e = evening

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)
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Windows 95	Ben Carnevale	(203) 748-1751	(e)
WordPerfect	John Heckman	(203) 831-0442	(e)

Directors' Notes

The monthly board meeting was held at the Resource Center on Monday, March 8. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, David, Cohen, Heere, Ostergren, Preston, Setaro, and Mrs. Gaberel. Chairman David presided. Secretary Buoy recorded the proceedings. Minutes of the February meeting were approved.

Finance & membership

Treasurer Bovaird reported combined checking and postal accounts balances of \$15,008.23 and postage on hand of \$22.31, for a total cash balance of \$15,030.54.

New hardware & OS

Jeff Setaro reported that the NT operating system and the Service Pack 4 had been installed in the Resource Center computer, but that the dedicated SCSI card for the scanner is not supported by NT and would have to be replaced by an Adaptec unit. Discussion about control of access privileges to the computer ensued resulting in talk of allotting disk space and password control for anticipated uses.

DCC co-sponsorship

President Ostergren announced that Stephen Bull, President of the Danbury Chamber of Commerce, had invited DACS to cosponsor the Chamber's April "gathering," at no cost to DACS, and participate in networking activities. No firm date was set, but such events are usually held midweek late in the month.

Y2K conference

Concerning the upcoming Y2K conference to be held in May, Ed Heere announced that he would be moderating the panel, Tom McIntyre would comment on financial issues, and participants from APICS, IBM, appropriate departments of the State of Connecticut, and other presenters were being sought. Also discussed were the anticipated audience, the capacity of available venues, and technically proficient videotaping for publicity or other purposes.

Voice for Joanie

President Ostergren commented on the VFJ presentation at the March general

Directors' Notes Continued on page 5

Meeting Review

Many Dimensions of Information

What Microsoft Office 2000 is all about

By Jack Corcoran

Every year the DACS general meetings are John Patrick's state-of-the-art presentation and Microsoft's briefing on their new software. When John last spoke to us, he presented a dazzling image of things to come: E-commerce, collaboration over the Web, and project participation completely independent of location. We soared with his vision and knew with certainty that it would all come about—someday. But John's presentation was made a long time ago, way back in December of 1998. Now, in March of 1999, Microsoft came to town and showed us that the tools for that future are here and now.

Our March general meeting was attended by 150 members and an equal number of visitors, some of whom signed in and others who just drifted it. It was testimony to the fact that a lot of people out there are tuned in to DACS. The subject was Microsoft's Office 2000, due out about June. Our presenter was Brett Davis from the Partner and Consumer Education Dept. of Microsoft's NY/NJ office. Brett is becoming a familiar face to DACS members. He was the speaker at our November meeting, where he showed us a number of Microsoft products, including Money 99, Combat Flight Simulator, and others just right for Christmas presents. This time Brett presented us with an excellent preview of the eight applications in the Office 2000 suite. He demonstrated snippets of each, emphasizing how they play together. In the time he had, Brett had to stick primarily to the features of the applications. The implications of them all working together emerged as he spoke.

As good as Brett was, and as delightful as many of the new features of Office 2000 are, the importance of the meeting was in showing how each of the components of the suite contributes to transforming data and words into a brand-new way of working with and presenting information to people.

Computers and communications media have added new dimensions to the concept of information.

Computers and communications media have added new dimensions to the concept of information. Multimedia, Web search, Web distribution, network collaboration, computer algorithms, and other emerging electronically generated capabilities have become as fundamental to information as data and words. From that point of view, let's look at the components of Office 2000.

Word 2000 works along the traditional word dimension. It edits, formats, and structures documents. It has been expanded to handle HTML. It is also specifically designed to "round trip" (great new buzz word) information to the Web, where it can pick up comments and modifications from on-line collaborators and then pop right back into Word.

Excel 2000 works along the data structure dimension. Table data can be dragged from an Internet browser directly into a spreadsheet. A new feature, pivot tables, provides alternate views of data. It, also, can move data directly to and from a Web browser.

PowerPoint 2000 is Microsoft's application for preparing slide presentations. The 2000 version adds some new hoops, but most significantly creates a presentation dimension directly from the other components. The good old dog and pony show will never look the same.

Access 2000 is the functionality dimension. It is Web-centric in that it is now designed specifically to deliver Web pages from the databases it manages. It can be configured for either E-mail or the Web.

Publisher 2000 and FrontPage 2000 are the composite dimensions, Publisher for printed output and FrontPage for the Web. They are built to painlessly access a vast reservoir of design themes, templates, and clip art. Wizards help you customize to your specific intent.

Outlook 2000 is designed to cope with the deluge of E-mail by managing it. Outlook uses rules, key features, color cod-

ing, and other neat tricks. It handles HTML and XML so that E-mail can include anything you can see on a Web page. It also supports the V-card, which is a virtual business card and sure to become a darling of everyone. Outlook also is implemented to support meetings and contacts on the Web.

PhotoDraw 2000 is an impressive program that the other components can call on for the visual effects dimension. The Draw and Place feature makes it seem like graphics capabilities are built in to every app.

Another major advance that will have a tremendous effect in time is the integration of multiple national languages into the programs. Gone is the day when a different version is constructed for each language. Using the 16-bit Unicode characters and extensive word recognition, there is just one international version of the program. The user selects the language for the user interface. Also, the program will recognize foreign words in its word-processing routines for spell correction. The long-term effects here will be a major simplification of processing data between countries and a building up of international interdependencies.

OFFICE 2000 comes in four sizes. Standard includes only Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint. Premium includes everything. Small Business and Professional are in between.

If all you want to do is to continue your word-processing and spreadsheet maintenance, don't bother with any of them. Stay with what you have. If, however, John Patrick's visions are still in your head and you want to be a player, then you have to do the Full Monty and get the Professional package. You have to put yourself through the excruciating and humbling learning curve of all eight programs because you have to develop the mindset of working along all the dimensions. The way we do things has changed.

You don't really have to consider information as a multidimensioned entity. You can think of it as a dynamic object-oriented data structure, or even as a many-splendored thing, but you must look at it very differently than in the past. This is what Office 2000 is really all about.

CORCORAN@snet.net is an old, retired computer programmer who may have lost a dimension or two but who can still recognize a many-splendored thing.

Directors' Notes Continued from page 3

meeting and the resultant donations of two 486s and a laptop to the program.

NewsTimes Q&A

Mr. Ostergren also brought up the issue of the first Q&A column in the Danbury NewsTimes. Discussion followed on the advisability of establishing a time window between receipt of questions and submission of answers, the inclusion of a liability disclaimer for such answers, and the establishment of a policy to restrict answers to software or operating subjects only. Also, we could offer other material from dacs.doc for the High Tech page features.

Mac for Mac SIG

Mr. Ostergren advised the Mac SIG of the Board's request for specs outlining a usable Mac system for the Resource Center. Discussed was the usefulness of a used Mac system available through Ed Heere.

Corporate Web links

Jeff Setaro reported that the links to Web pages of our corporate sponsors, an incentive to dacs.doc advertisers previously established, have been included in the electronic dacs.doc. Discussion of the need to revitalize the ad content of dacs.doc followed, including the services of volunteer representative(s) to actively pursue increased advertising.

Hotel bill

Discussed next was the billing from the Ethan Allen Inn of an additional \$400 for opening an additional room to accommodate the overflow attendance at the March 2 general meeting and Office 2000 presentation. Wally David was asked to negotiate with Ethan Allen for a possible reduction of this unanticipated expense.

Digital camera

Further discussion was held regarding the use of the digital camera acquired for enhancing the visual aspects of dacs.doc and the handling of digital file formats for inclusion in the electronic dacs.doc.

ESRM recognizes Heere

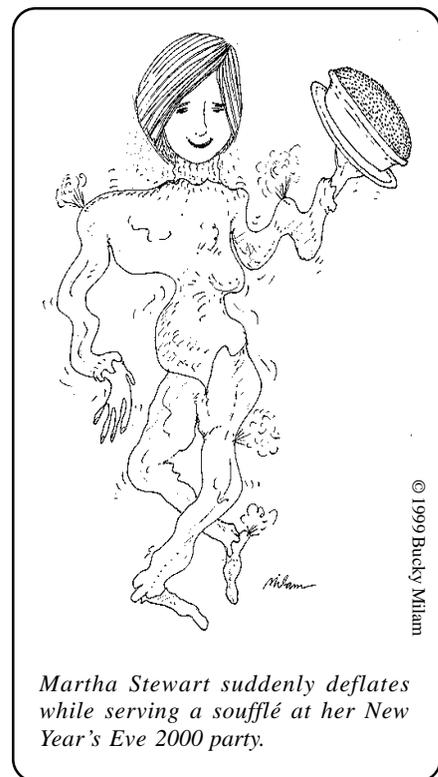
Ed Heere read a letter from the Educational Society for Resource Management, the Danbury chapter of APICS, thanking him for his participation as a speaker at their February professional development dinner and presenting him with a \$25 check to be donated to DACS in appreciation. Included in the letter was an offer to co-host some educational sessions, usually half-day seminars, suggesting 8 a.m to 12 noon on April 7 with a scheduled afternoon session.

Net rates false rumor

Mr. Heere further commented on his investigation of the generally circulated false rumor that the FCC was considering establishing rate structures for Internet communication. Congressman James Maloney answered an inquiry from Ed with the information that the action considered by the FCC involved only reallocation of the funds already collected for long-distance service among the various organizations already involved in view of increasing use of voiceover Internet communication.

Ed also said that AMSYS would be sending out a press release offering voluntary help to any nonprofit organization with Y2K readiness problems and, in cooperation with DACS, encouraging donations of computers for educational and community outreach programs.

— LARRY BUOY



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Martha Stewart suddenly deflates while serving a soufflé at her New Year's Eve 2000 party.

Local Access Internet Providers

AT&T WORLDNET	800-967-5363
CLOUD 9	914-682-0384
CONCENTRIC NWKS	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
MICROSOFT NETWORK	800-386-5550
NETAXIS	203-969-0618
NETCOM	800-353-6600
NORTH AMERICAN	800-952-INET
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ON THE NET	203-270-6388
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Microsoft Antitrust Case

Gates Gets Justice Hurts

When the gavel falls, will anything happen?

By John Heckman

THERE ARE THREE ISSUES at stake in the Microsoft trial as it stumbles toward a conclusion—actually an interim conclusion, since there is bound to be an appeal, whatever happens. These are: Is Microsoft a monopoly? Does it wield monopolistic power in such a way as to disadvantage consumers and/or destroy competitors? If so, what should be done about it?

Is Microsoft a Monopoly?

There can be very little doubt that Microsoft is a monopoly by any traditional definition of the term. In any other industry, if you said that Company X had a 95% market share, the question would not even be debated. Think of automobiles, television, or telephones.

A recent article in *Business Week* referred to Microsoft as an example of “extreme capitalism.” There can be very little doubt that Microsoft was in fact out to destroy Netscape or anybody else that got in its way. Aside from the evidence emerging in the trial, Microsoft is legendary for its heavy-handed “you will be assimilated, resistance is futile” approach (there must be almost as many Bill Gates jokes as there are lawyer jokes). “But,” the response runs, “that is what all companies do under capitalism: Seek to gain market share at the expense of competitors. If they are in a position to get the whole pie, so to speak, we should let the free market take its course.”

Americans tend to be somewhat schizophrenic on the question of free-market competition. If you ask anyone, they are probably “in favor of it” but don’t like the consequences! The basic problem is that untrammled free-market competition has historically often produced monopolies or near-monopolies, as the Department of Justice’s attorneys have been quick to point out. Examples range from Rockefeller’s Standard Oil to American Tobacco, Big Steel, Alcoa, major movie studios, IBM, and AT&T. Microsoft falls into

this monopoly-producing category. If Bill Gates had lived in the nineteenth century, he would have been right at home with the Rockefellers, Carnegies, Mellons, and other robber barons whose existence originally spawned antitrust regulations.



Are Consumers Harmed?

One of the technical issues in the trial is this: Are consumers being harmed by Microsoft’s practices? The problem here is that the question can be determined only by a series of “what if” scenarios. As anyone who has ever seen Jurassic Park knows, the branch of mathematics known as “chaos theory” convincingly demonstrates that insignificantly small changes in one

are can lead to massive (and totally unpredictable) additional changes. For example, if Windows had not “won out,” would OS/2 be wielding monopoly power over the operating system? Or would a presently extinct breed of software have a major market share?

But there is a lot of anecdotal evidence to suggest that consumers *are* being harmed—financially and in other ways—by the operations of the Microsoft behemoth. Here are some examples:

Consumer software prices have decreased dramatically in the past five to eight years. If the price of Windows “followed the market,” it would probably cost around \$39. However, the price of Windows has remained virtually constant over that time. So in the context of general market prices, it could be argued that Microsoft is effectively “stealing” about \$50 or so from everyone who buys Windows.

Have you ever tried to buy a computer without Word installed and get a refund for the price of Word that you don’t want? Recently, a number of people have made the news by trying to get refunds for Windows, saying that they have not opened the package, don’t agree to the license and won’t use it. A few people have gotten their money back, but for most people, good luck!

I recently tried to purchase a server for a client of mine from one of the major hardware companies, with Novell NetWare preinstalled instead of NT Server. I was told by the salesman that the company didn’t offer that option “because of our close relationship with Microsoft.” So not only did I have to pay more than I probably otherwise would have, but in addition, the client had to pay for my time to install NetWare.

Microsoft has not been harmful to everyone, however. As a primary purveyor of software that almost works,” Microsoft has been very beneficial for computer consultants. Cynics have suggested that the fact that a consultant will typically derive more income from a site with NT Server installed than from the same site running NetWare (because there is so much more to be done to get the software to work right) may help explain why so many consultants are pro-Microsoft.

What Is To Be Done?

Even if one agrees that Microsoft wields monopoly powers wherever it can, the question of what to do about it is a different story entirely. Microsoft



"I suspect that the government will "win" the case (especially since Microsoft continues to shoot itself in the foot by approaching the trial as if it were a marketing campaign), but that nothing much will happen."

makes a very powerful point when it argues that it would be catastrophic to have the government play a role in deciding how software development should be conducted. For all the criticisms one can make of Windows, I would hate to even imagine what Windows-designed-by-the-government would look like! As a real-life example, look at the government's disastrous attempts to control encryption algorithms.

The most appealing suggestion I've heard (and also one of the most outrageous) is to make Windows into an open source code program so that it could compete with Linux.

Realistically, I suspect that the government will "win" the case (especially since Microsoft continues to shoot itself in the foot by approaching the trial as if it were a marketing campaign), but that nothing much will happen. However, if I don't have to take an hour or two to clean out all the crap from the Windows 98 installation, I will be that much ahead of the game, and if I can buy a server with NetWare preinstalled, I-and my clients-will be better off than we were before.

JOHN HECKMAN is president of Heckman Consulting, a software integration firm specializing in the legal industry. He has been a frequent contributor to dacs.doc.

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Participate in new product development using Windows '95/NT. The product will include the ability to maintain program database using Windows user interface in an embedded system. Position requires 2+ years experience using Windows '95/NT operating system, knowledge of WIN 32, and experience with C, C++, Visual C++, MFC, ODBC, RDBMS, SQL, OOAD, Multi-threading, Client-Server helpful.

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FEBRUARY 14 - MARCH 19, 1999



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- 2) Skip Agen
- 3) APICS Danbury Ch #242
- 4) Ronald Benson
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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:** April 13.

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:** April 14.

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:** April 28.

INVESTMENT STRATEGIES. Discusses 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:** April 22.

INTERNET. Acquaints DACS members with the Internet.

Contact: Larry Stevens (LStevens@usa.net) or Richard Koser (rkoser@worldnet.att.net). Meets 3rd Wednesdays, 7p.m., DACS Resource Cntr, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main St., Danbury.

Next Meeting: April 21.

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: April 20.

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: April 7.

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 on last Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., at Datahr, Brookfield.

Next Meeting: April 27.

WALL STREET. Examines new 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), 198 Main Street, Danbury. **Next Meeting:** April 26.

WEBSITE DESIGN. Designs and maintains the DACS Website.

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:** April 14.

WINDOWS. Explores all aspects of Windows 95.

Contact: Ben Carnevale (203 748-1751) or send e-mail to W1VZT@aol.com). Meets on 1st Friday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury. **Next Meeting:** April 2.

SIG News

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

ACCESS The Access SIG continues its well-received split program. The first half of the meeting consists of general database design concepts not specific to MS Access. Having completed several sessions on table design, we are now working on query design and performance techniques, and will soon move on to report generation based upon queries. The second half of the meeting is devoted to "problems and solutions," where we collectively develop solutions to member's requirements.

GRAPHICS The Graphics SIG caters to all skill levels. Join us at Best Photo in Brookfield the last Wednesday of each month. Bring your graphics problems. Call Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 for additional information.

INTERNET In March we had a St. Patrick's Day "Broadband Field Trip" to Charter Communication's office in Newtown, CT. Joe Romano of Charter gave a demonstration of the latest in cable-modem technology and the Internet over the TV connection, and provided information about pricing and timing. Topics for upcoming meetings include "Earthly Library Resources" and "How Do Bytes Get From Here to There?"

VISUAL BASIC The March meeting began with Random Access questions, one of which led to a discussion of Windows handles: what they are for and why you need them. The main program continued the saga of the Soccer database. Using third-party controls in Access, the topic for the February meeting, led to a discussion on how to use the Object Browser—cool stuff. Come to the next VB SIG meeting to learn about more cool stuff—no fooling!

WEBSITE DESIGN The April meeting will feature a presentation by Melissa Sader of IBM on building sites for e-Commerce. E-commerce is about more than buying and selling products on-line. Customer support, supply-chain management and on-line advertising are vital subsets of the e-commerce business model. Melissa will cover these topics and also talk about how to protect transactions and provide a secure e-commerce environment.

Melissa is a program manager in the IBM Internet Technology Group, where she is responsible for the production of several intranet and Internet sites as well as on-line marketing and communications activities. Prior to joining IBM in 1998, Melissa was the Internet Product Manager for SkyTel Communications in Washington, DC. With the launch of www.skytel.com in 1994, SkyTel was the first paging company to provide an on-line method of sending messages to its customers via the Internet. Subsequent iterations of the site included the first on-line Interactive System Coverage guide offered by a paging company. Melissa holds a B.A. in Communications, Legal Institutions, Economics, and Government from American Univ. in Washington, DC, and currently resides in Danbury, CT.

WINDOWS The March meeting was very interesting. Many questions were asked and situations recreated on the computer and resolved. We wish Ellen and Fred Parrella a safe and enjoyable trip abroad, and also welcome our newest member, Paulo Freitas. This is a hands-on SIG, and new members are encouraged to attend. Please contact Ben at 203 748-1751 or W1vzt@aol.com prior to attending.

April 1999

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																												
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Operating Systems

Linux Challenge

Adventure game or next OS?

By Richard Corzo

THE LINUX operating system has been getting a lot of press this past year as an up-and-coming possible competitor to Windows. I thought it might make an interesting addition to my computer's existing stable of operating systems: Windows 95, 98, NT, and OS/2.

I started reading about the different "distributions" of Linux. In theory Linux, a clone of UNIX that runs on PCs or Macs, can be downloaded for free from various sites on the Internet. This would not be recommended for a first-time user of Linux, or someone with an ordinary modem connection to the Internet. There are several companies that conveniently package Linux on CD-ROM. I decided to try Red Hat Linux, which is supposed to be one of the easier distributions to install. The latest version is 5.2, released in November 1998.

My first point of confusion after deciding on Red Hat was finding there is more than one Red Hat distribution available. I first ran across a "Red Hat 5.2 Deluxe" in a light gray box that is actually published by MacMillan. It is supposed to contain the text of four Linux books on the CD-ROM and comes with 30 days of support. Later at a bookstore I found and bought the official Red Hat in a blue box, which includes 90 days of e-mail support and has an extra CD-ROM of demo Linux applications. A typical price would be \$39.95. For less money you can also get a copy of the Red Hat distribution on CD-ROM from various mail-order companies such as CheapBytes that does not include a hard-copy manual.

A couple of other distributions worth mentioning are Caldera OpenLinux, which seems to cater more to the business market, and S.u.S.E. Linux, which is most popular in Europe. You may also run across the Slackware distribution in the back of a Linux book, which is known for being difficult to install but which is noteworthy for being one of the first Linux distributions available. MkLinux and LinuxPPC are versions that run on the Power Macintosh.

I had planned to install Linux on my third hard drive but found out that the boot or root partition needs to go on the first or second hard drive. I still had room to add a partition on my second drive, so I chose to put the root partition there, with a swap partition and a /usr partition on the third drive.

Explanations

Well, already I have to start explaining some things because Linux is very different

from the DOS, Windows, or Mac world. Linux has its own file system, which is different from the common FAT file system used on PCs by DOS and Windows. Instead of drive letters like C:, D:, and so on, it has a hierarchical system of directories and files with a common root designated by "/", no matter how many physical partitions Linux may span. Under the root directory you will see top-level directory names such as /root, /home, /usr, and /var. Notice that Linux uses a forward slash instead of the backward slash to delimit the directories and subdirectories, for example, /usr/local. If you don't have much experience with partitions, you may want to use a second hard drive separate from your Windows stuff, or if you have an older computer still around, that might also make a safe laboratory to do your Linux experimentation in. A 486 should work, or maybe even a 386 for just text mode, but you'll need a minimum of 16 MB of memory (more would definitely be better). I'd recommend at least 500 MB of disk space to give Linux a real try.

Installation

Suffice it to say that if you are a Linux novice you'll need to do a little research before jumping into an installation. In many cases you need to know exactly what sort of hardware you've got—videocard, soundcard, etc.—and for ISA cards what IRQs and I/O addresses they require. If you have Windows 95 on your machine the Device Manager is a great place to gather this information and print it out. It's also good if you have some documentation on your monitor, because you'll need to know exactly what range of horizontal and vertical refresh rates it supports. Once you reach the point of actually starting the installation, it goes pretty quickly—faster than any other 32-bit OS I've installed.

In my case I knew my Matrox videocard wasn't supported out of the box with Red Hat 5.2, but I could go ahead and install it and boot to a command prompt, and then download and install an updated version of the X Window System later to provide a GUI environment. When I first went looking for an update to the XFree86 X Window System at <http://www.xfree86.org>, I found the required installation files in .tar.gz compressed format. Aside from the basic files you'll need the VGA16 driver for the setup utilities, and one other driver specific to your videocard. To configure your mouse, keyboard, and moni-

tor I recommend XF86Setup instead of the Xconfigurator or xf86config utilities mentioned in the RedHat Installation Guide. The first page of setup is for your mouse. Be careful to use only the keyboard and not the mouse until you've chosen the correct protocol for your mouse. After completing the installation I started the GUI environment using the command Startx.

When I first saw the GUI come up, there wasn't much there—just two or three command windows floating on a solid color background. There was no Program Manager, File Manager, or any icons. The windows didn't even have a frame around them, just a title bar. I couldn't even figure out how to resize a window. Later I came to learn that I was using a "window manager" called twm, or Tab Window Manager, which is a minimal default window manager that comes as part of the XFree86 package. If your videocard is supported out of the box in your chosen Linux distribution, you won't run into this unfriendly welcome. You'll likely be greeted by something like fvwm95, which looks a little similar to Windows 95, or AfterStep, or the new full-blown desktop environment called KDE, which will be an easier adjustment for someone used to Windows. Red Hat is promoting another new desktop environment called Gnome. The nice thing is that you have a choice of a GUI shell that sits on top of the Linux operating system. I'm currently using Window Maker, which emulates the look and feel of the NextStep OS.

Learning Curve

Linux will be tough logging at first. I felt like I was playing one of those adventure games where you're not quite sure what the object of the game is, but you go foraging around for clues until some pieces start to come together. The commands are mostly different from DOS/Windows (e.g. ls instead of dir to list the contents of a directory). The configuration files are scattered all over rather than being centralized like the Windows registry. It seems like almost everything I have working in Linux now took some effort. Here are some simple things you might take for granted that I had to expend some effort to get to work or figure out:

I can boot Linux from my root partition on the hard drive instead of from a boot floppy.

I can print to my PostScript laser printer.

I can dial my ISP and connect to the Internet.

I can listen to a music CD.

I can read files from a CD-ROM or a floppy.

I can read and write files from a FAT partition used by Windows (also read from an OS/2 HPFS partition).

I can use helper applications and plug-ins to play sounds and video in Netscape (multimedia is not built in).

I can scroll with the wheel on my IntelliMouse.

An excellent book a fellow customer in a computer store recommended is *A Practical Guide to Linux* by Mark Sobell. It's a thorough tutorial and general reference book on Linux from a Unix expert. However, the one thing it's not good for is supplying information on installing or configuring a particular distribution of Linux. For instance, it was of no help when I was trying to set up my Internet connection in Linux. You may want to look for a second book specific to your distribution if you didn't already buy one with a CD-ROM distribution inside.

Almost any problem you'll run into in setting up Linux has been encountered by someone before you. Since there are likely fewer people around you that know Linux versus Windows or the Mac OS, you'll need to learn to use the Usenet newsgroups on the Internet. You can browse through the many Linux newsgroups using a newsreader, or point your browser to a newsgroup search site such as Deja News (<http://www.dejanews.com>) and type in a few key words to find newsgroup postings on your very problem.

On your CD-ROM there will be a whole series of Linux HOWTO documents and there's also a Website index of HowTos at <http://metalab.unc.edu/LDP/HowTo/>. There are various other sites dedicated to Linux, but one I particularly like is <http://linux.mininco.com>. I especially recommend the article series entitled "Introducing Linux."

Locally, DACS has its own Advanced Operating System SIG, but if you're willing to travel to Cheshire, CT, there are also some very knowledgeable Linux folks in the Connecticut Free Unix Group (<http://www.cfug.org>).

Things I Like About Linux

The operating system seems to very stable. It doesn't force you to reboot to resolve application crashes. I've occasionally had Netscape for Linux hang, but all I had to do was kill it from an Xterm command line window and I was back in business. The application problem didn't destabilize the rest of the system in any way. Installing an application doesn't require a reboot, either. The only time I was ever forced to reboot was when I upgraded

the kernel, or made a change to the partitions on the hard drive.

Linux doesn't force you to do everything in the GUI environment. The command line environment can be very efficient and is capable of accomplishing things without the GUI, with full network access. For instance, when I was upgrading my X Window System, which provides the GUI videodriver services, I was able to dial my Internet provider and use ftp to download a missing file, all without the GUI.

The security model is much more sensible than Windows NT. You can temporarily log in as the superuser from a command line to install a program or perform some other administrative task. All without logging



off your current user ID. With Windows NT you would have to completely log off and exit the desktop environment to log on as an Administrator. I've generally found this so inconvenient that I've given up on trying to run Windows NT as an ordinary user, and just given myself Administrator authority.

With Linux I can make use of the security features without it getting too much in the way. Some permissions do need to be set up properly at the start, but thereafter the security doesn't get in the way of getting things done. For example, at the outset you may find that you can't listen to a music CD or access a CD-ROM drive as an ordinary user, but if as superuser you choose to give read permission on the CD device for other users, they (or you as an ordinary user) can use of the device without a problem.

Linux is so educational. You will learn things about your computer and networking you never knew before. It will be very frus-

trating at first, like learning a foreign language, but ultimately you'll find it very rewarding.

The file system is much more flexible when you need to reconfigure as your system grows. If you decide to move your /home or /usr directory to a separate or new partition, you don't have to worry about the nonsense of drive letters changing that might break your applications. You just copy the directory to the new location with a temporary directory name, rename or unmount the original, mount the new partition under the permanent name, and your back in business with nary an application broken by the move.

Many applications are free. If you can handle a 70MB download you can get a complete office suite with a word processor, spreadsheet, presentations program, database, personal information manager, drawing and graphics program, and Internet browser free for personal use. It's called Star Office 5.0 from Star Division (<http://www.stardivision.com>). It can open and save in MS Office formats as well as HTML and its own native file formats. If you don't want to try the download, you can order the CD-ROM with a manual for \$39.95. You can also get WordPerfect for Linux from Corel.

So is Linux ready for the masses? It's certainly proven itself as a server OS. Many Websites run Linux with the free Apache Web server and FTP server programs that come with it. Some of the top computer companies are now offering Linux preinstalled on their server machines. The next market to conquer is the desktop OS. As of this writing it's not quite ready for mass deployment, but for you early adopters willing to invest the time in learning a new OS, you'll get a stable OS that's a refreshing alternative to Windows. Soon when Linux becomes available preinstalled on a computer that the average user can buy, then I think we'll have some real competition in the desktop OS market for a change.

RICHARD CORZO, a computer programmer currently working for Packard BioScience Company in Meriden, CT, has been working with 32-bit PC operating systems for the past seven years

DRUG DEALERS VS. SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS

Compare and contrast

DRUG DEALERS

Refer to their clients as "users."
 "The first one's free!"

Have important Southeast Asian connections.
 (to help move the stuff).

Strange jargon:
 "Stick"
 "Rock"
 "Wrap"
 "E"
 "Stash"
 "Drive by"
 "Hit (LSD)"
 "Source"
 "The Pigs"

Realize that there's tons of cash in the
 14- to 25-year-old market.

Users really like your stuff when it works.
 If it doesn't, they want to kill you.

Job security is assisted by the industry, producing
 newer, more potent product.

Often seen in the company of pimps,
 hustlers, and lowlifes.

When things go wrong, a fix is just a phone call away,
 but may prove expensive.

A lot of successful people are getting rich in this
 industry while still teenagers.

Their product causes unhealthy addictions.

Do your job well and you get to sleep with sexy movie
 stars, who depend on you.

SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS

Refer to their clients as "users."
 "Download a free trial version ..."

Have important Southeast Asian connections
 (to help debug the code).

Strange jargon:
 "SCSI"
 "RTFM"
 "Packet"
 "C"
 "Cache"
 "CTRL ALT DEL"
 "Hit (WWW)"
 "Source-code"
 "Microsoft"

Realize that there's tons of cash in
 the 14- to 25-year-old market.

Users really like your stuff when it works.
 If it doesn't, they want to kill you.

Job security is assisted by the industry, producing
 newer, more potent products.

Often seen in the company of marketing people,
 venture capitalists, and fund managers.

When things go wrong, a fix is just a phone call away,
 but may prove expensive.

A lot of successful people are getting rich in this
 industry while still teenagers.

Their product causes unhealthy addictions.
 DOOM. Quake. SimCity. Duke Nukem 3D. 'Nuff said.
 Damn! Damn! DAMN!!!

—FROM THE INTERNET

CDI INFORMATION SERVICES

The logo features a vertical stack of technology names: ORACLE, UNIX, SAP, PC TECHS, Lotus Notes, and CDI CORP. Arrows point from ORACLE to UNIX, UNIX to SAP, SAP to PC TECHS, PC TECHS to Lotus Notes, and Lotus Notes to CDI CORP.

Openings in Westchester, Fishkill, Poughkeepsie, White Plains & Connecticut

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 WEB PROGRAMMERS
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- LOTUS NOTES**
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 DBAs
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EOE

How Computer Games Are Made

Part 3: Royalties, retailers, and rewards

by James C. Smith

THIS IS THE last segment of James C. Smith's profile of the computer games industry and what's in store for game-loving programmers who decide they want to make a living creating their own.

Money

Typically a developer works for royalties. After the retailers take their cut, the publisher gets most of the money from the sale of the game. A developer will get somewhere around 12% royalties on the wholesale cost of the game. If a game is selling for \$40 at Comp Superstore, chances are Comp Superstore paid the publisher about \$28 for the game. The developer gets 12% of that \$28. So, the developer ends up getting \$3.28 for the game the consumer paid \$40 for. The store kept \$12 and the publisher got the other \$2,4.72.

To cover the developer's costs during the production of the game, the publisher usually pays a lot of money up front. This money is made in payments approximately once a month on the condition that the developer meets specific milestones. All of this money paid to the developer during development is typically an advance on royalties. So, if a developer was paid \$700K to develop a game, he or she won't see any more royalties until the game has sold enough copies to pay back that advance.

In our previous example, over 200,000 copies of the game would have to be sold before the developer would receive any royalty payments. In most cases, the developer does not receive any royalties beyond the advance unless the game is a huge success. It is not uncommon for a publisher to give a developer an advance on royalties in the neighborhood of one half million to one and a half million dollars to create a game. The publisher will usually spend at least another million in advertising and retail slotting fees. Bigger games that include a lot of digital movies or other content can be much more expensive to develop, and advertising costs can be much higher for games with TV ads. Many games cost publishers several million dollars. Of course, there are plenty of low budget titles as well. I worked on one game that the publisher paid only \$30,000 to the developer and did not spend a dime on advertising. The game was very well done

(in my opinion) and managed to sell 40,000 copies. Not great, but better than expected for such a small budget. This type of game is really hard to get placed in the retail stores.

Retail shelf space is limited

It is surprisingly difficult to get a game product on the shelves in a retail outlet. Most retailers are flooded with more product than they have room for. Before retailers will stock your product, you need to convince them it will sell. The retailer wants to see the box design and will reject the product if the box doesn't look attractive enough. The retailer also wants to know what kind of advertising budget you have, if there is a free demo version of the game on the Internet, how many times the demo was downloaded, and any other information that will convince them your game will sell. It makes sense to me that a store wouldn't buy your product unless they thought it was a good product, but in most cases the store isn't buying the product. They only take it on consignment. If the product doesn't sell, the retailer can send it back to the publisher. The retailer almost never pays for games until after the games sell through to the consumer.

In addition to being extremely picky about the games they will stock, retailers also charge huge fees to get a game placed on their shelves. These fees are usually called "advertising fees" or "slotting fees." If you want the game put at eye level or in a display at the end of an aisle you have to pay even more. So, Comp Superstore won't stock your game unless they really like the game, and you pay them \$50,000. Then they will take a few thousand copies of your game without paying you for them, put them on the shelf in a bad spot for a few weeks, and pay you if they sell. If the game doesn't sell right away, Comp Superstore will pull all the copies from all the stores and send them back to you. Paying them more money will get you a better spot on the shelf and even more money may convince them to keep it on the shelf a little longer even if sales haven't gotten strong yet.

Most game developers can't afford to deal with the retailers in this way. That is why they need publishers. This is also why

publishers are extremely demanding when it comes to developers completing a project on time. The publisher has to develop a strong marketing strategy including ads in magazines, reserving shelf space in stores, creating a buzz on the Internet, convincing game magazines to write previews about the game, and in some cases even radio and TV advertisements. All of this is designed to come to a climax just before the product is released. This way, consumers will be waiting to grab the product off the shelf immediately. If the product is released late, it misses the marketing window and the hype will die down by the time the game makes it to the retailers. Then the retailer will end up pulling the product from the shelf in a matter of weeks if the sales aren't brisk enough.

It's not all bad

I have mostly been focusing on some of the more negative aspects of the video game industry. Obviously it isn't all bad or no one would be doing it. It can be very exciting, challenging, fun, rewarding, and profitable to work on video games. But it isn't all fun and games. There is a lot of hard work involved and many things about the process are frustrating and sometimes seem unfair. These are the aspects of the industry I have focused on because I think they are the parts most people don't know about. And find most interesting.

I have been working as a programmer for more than ten years. Most of that time was spent developing business, industrial, and educational software. I have only been working on games for the past three years. I am honestly not sure what I want to work on in the future. When it comes to developing videogames, there are plenty of pluses and minuses that cancel each other out. The two things that make me want to stick to games rather than going back to other types of programming are the challenge and the wide distribution. Creating videogames is far more challenging than any other type of programming I have done in the past. And creating a product that is purchased by thousands of consumers all over the world is very satisfying even if they all know the name of the publisher but not my name or my company's name.

JAMES C. SMITH, NOCCC, is director of software engineering at Reflexive Entertainment Inc., james@Reflexive.net. Copyright © 1995-7. Last update: 1/04/99 by North Orange County Computer Club. All rights reserved.

Random Access

Instant replay: February 1999

Bruce Preston, Moderator

DACS members who are unable to attend the general meetings are invited to submit their questions to askdacs@aol.com at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. We will submit the questions to the membership and post the answers in the next issue of dacs.doc.

AskDACS: *We are interested in purchasing a voice recognition program and were wondering if there was anyone in the club who has used one. We are particularly interested in Dragon Systems' Naturally Speaking. Any suggestions, recommendations, or words of wisdom would be helpful.*

- A. Of those who are currently using voice recognition software, the distribution was about even between Dragon's Naturally Speaking and IBM's Via Voice. There was general agreement that you must have a quality noise-canceling microphone, perhaps on a headset. The other comment was that the "Lite" version of Via Voice that comes bundled with IBM Lotus SmartSuite will work only with the SmartSuite products and cannot be used for controlling other Windows applications or Windows itself.

AskDACS: *I need a program that will let me control a mailing list the way that I want to do it. I need additional fields for sorting and selection purposes. The mailing list capability that is in Word is too limiting. I have MS Home Essentials and Excel.*

- A. Several suggestions: a) Define your own columns in Excel. You may then sort and select as you wish. Having made the selections, export the data to Word for printing; b) look at the use of tables within Word; and c) Lotus Organizer has many capabilities and is said to be available at Office Depot for \$9.95.

AskDACS: *The DACS Internet SIG would like to know what is next in connection technology, and*

what is currently available in the region.

- A. ISDN is currently available in SNET service areas and NY Telephone areas, although it is rather costly. Cable Modem technology is now being offered in several areas for about \$39/month, including cable modem rental. Members in Monroe, Redding, and Brewster reported having the service. The type of service depends on the state of the cable provider's system: Some earlier implementers use one-way cable modems, which require a regular telephone connection for sending commands to the ISP (e.g. URL requests, or uploads of e-mail messages). Others have two-way communication.

According to Motorola, which has shipped about 70% of the installed base for Cable Modems, its CableSURFR modem provides a nominal 10 mbps download and 768 kbps upstream connection. Visit www.mot.com/MIMS/multimedia/ for more information. Another new technology, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), is not available in the immediate area, although there is now advertising that "Red" (from RedConnect, www.redconnect.com) is available in New York City. See www.nortelnetworks.com/pcn/Imegmodem/intro/home.html for a description. It claims that the service level will not degrade as more users are added to the network, a concern for cable modem installations, since there is an upper limit of about 30 mbps bandwidth available on an individual cable segment (you and your neighbors). DSL boasts 1.3 mbps download and 320 kbps upstream.

AskDACS: *I recently installed RealPlayer and my system is now experiencing a freeze requiring me to reboot and then run ScanDisk. According to Task Manager (made visible by press-*

ing Ctrl-Alt-Del), I have approximately 16 applications or services running. I am running Windows 95 on a PII-300 with 64MB of RAM, a 56K modem, and Netscape 3.0. Tech support at Real.Com says that I have to eliminate about 12 apps to free up memory. How do I get rid of them?

- A. First, make sure you are running the latest release of RealPlayer, available for download from www.realplayer.com. Having said that, a lot depends upon what those 16 applications are. If they are applications such as PhotoShop or AutoCAD, etc. which are very resource intensive, then perhaps you should unload them when you are surfing the Web. However, there are a lot of applications that show up in the taskbar that are not likely to be causing a problem, such as: printer spool managers, QuickRes, Nprotect, etc., which control your printer, screen resolution, anti-virus, etc. Some may be required while you are running Netscape or Internet Explorer, such as RNAAPP (your Remote Network Adapter, which provides you with PPP support while you are connected to the Internet).

One thing to do is to take inventory of your applications before you connect to the Internet. At that time, the only application that you really must have running is Explorer, which is the Windows shell. Note that this is not the same as Windows Explorer or Internet Explorer. All of the others were probably started from one of several places: the Start Up folder, which is in Windows\Start Menu\Programs and is the normal place for user-elected startup applications. Common things you will find there are MS Office Fast Start (which starts helper libraries so that MS Office applications start faster), MS Find Fast (which indexes MS Office documents so that you can search them by content or keyword), etc.

If you are not a heavy user of MS Office products, these shortcuts in the Start Up folder may (should?) be deleted. Note that deleting the shortcut does not delete the application, just the

launch of the application. Other places that can launch applications are the RUN= and LOAD= lines in \WINDOWS\WIN.INI (commonly used by Windows 3.x applications), and in the Windows Registry at these subkeys of \HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\subkey: Run subkey: RunService subkey: RunOnce subkey: RunServiceOnce The latter two are normally used only by an installation program that requires the setup be continued after an intervening boot so that new DLLs or device drivers may be loaded before the setup continues. However, if there is a problem with completing the installation, the keys may have not been deleted. Lastly, the consensus at the meeting was that you shouldn't have a problem running RealPlayer on a machine with 64MB.

Q. I have a Compaq Presario 4508 with 48MB of RAM. Maybe one time out of five, when the machine goes into Suspend mode, if I wake the machine the mouse is frozen. The only way to get the machine operable is to reboot the machine.

A. Some have seen this behavior if the energy-saving feature in the ROM BIOS as well as the energy-saving features in Windows 9x are enabled. What can happen is that the hardware wake-up call is consumed and not passed on to the software, or visa versa. Our suggestion is to get into the ROM BIOS Setup and disable the power-saving features there and just use the capabilities from within Windows 9x.

Q. I have a CTX laptop 700 Series with Windows 95. It doesn't recognize PC Cards (formerly called PCMCIA cards) inserted into the PC card slot.

A. Make sure the "Socket Services" have been installed. If you didn't have the machine configured to support Socket Services when you purchased the machine (perhaps because you didn't order a PC Card at the time), they may not have been installed. You can see if they are installed if you see a PC Card applet in Control Panel. You should have received a diskette containing

socket services software; if so, install it. You can also try to install from Add New Hardware: Bypass the automatic search, and select PCMCIA Socket. If the applet is present, open it and see if perhaps it had been set to "deactivate," which might have been done if you didn't need a PC Card support when the machine was built.

Q. When I install a new application in my IBM should I use the Aptiva install application utility, or the Windows Add/Remove Software application. I want to be able to properly uninstall the application if I don't like it.

A. Both of these mechanisms ultimately start the software installation utility specific to the application. For the large majority of applications, this means they will use an application from InstallShield called SETUP to actually perform the installation. This utility is responsible for creating the registration entries needed for deinstallation, and for leaving the .ISU file used to perform the uninstall. A comment: When you uninstall an application, the uninstaller will only remove those portions of the application that it put on the machine. There are three types of files to consider: a) files (and directories) placed by SETUP during installation into the application's directory, b) files placed by SETUP in a shared location such as WINDOWS\SYSTEM, and c) files created by the user. Files in category "a" will be removed. Files in category "b" might be removed, but if there is a possibility that they are also used by other applications, they will be left on the machine. If SETUP finds a shared component already in place, it bumps a "usage" counter to reflect that more than one application is using the component. Files in category "c" will never be removed. This later situation will often result in the directories/folders not being removed, with a consequent message that "uninstall was not able to remove" some files.

Q. Does anyone use a laptop with Sprint PCS or other cellular service?

A. A representative from Danbury Hospital says that they use it for some of their dial-up capabilities,

and it works fine.

Q. I have a new Aptiva and it gets corrupted. Specifically, it keeps finding multiple copies of the same device, installing them, and then complaining about it. For example, it reports that I have two mice, two sound cards, etc. If I delete them, they come back the next time I boot.

A. We have seen this when Windows detects a device, installs a device driver but then, as part of the installation, asks for the diskette or CD from the manufacturer. The subsequent driver process then sets up an installation run for the next boot, and you end up loading the device driver again. The recommended process was to start the machine in SAFE MODE, then delete the device. Then shut down the machine and cold-boot it. When it finds new hardware, tell it to NOT install the device. Then go into the manual installation SETUP process on the diskette or CD provided by the manufacturer. This will prevent an incomplete and redundant install by making sure that there is only one request for the device in the registry at "\HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunOnce"

BRUCE PRESTON is president of West Mountain Systems, Inc., a consultancy specializing in database technology. In addition to moderating the Random Access sessions during the General Meeting, he is a member of the DACS Board of Directors and the chair of the DACS MS Access SIG.

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