

Microsoft Stuff for the Holidays

Come to the DACS meeting at the Danbury Hospital auditorium on November 2, for demonstrations of the latest gift titles from the software giant.

- **Microsoft Encarta® Encyclopedia 2000.** The best-selling encyclopedia in the world, Encarta 2000 provides rich content and advanced technology that sets the standard for an engaging educational experience. Not only the kids will love it, but also all the members of the family can use it.

- **Graphics Studio Home Publishing Suite 2000.** Home Publishing Suite is perfect for the creative types you know. It has one of the most comprehensive sets of home desktop publishing tools around. Learn how to create high-quality print and multimedia projects such as greeting cards, screen savers, Web pages, collages, and more for all occasions. You'll also learn how easy it is to become an expert at digital imaging with the power of Picture It!™ 2000, which is included in the Home Publishing Suite

- **Works™ 2000.** Works 2000 provides the essential tools you need for home computing. Microsoft improved the most popular integrated software package

by updating it all—word processor, spreadsheet, database, calendar, address book, and Outlook Express. Works 2000 is designed specifically for the home user because the predefined tasks, templates, and wizards make home computing simple, quick, and easy.

- **Flight Simulator 2000.** Finally, you can experience the latest edition of the best-selling PC game ever. Enjoy the thrill of climbing into the cockpit of a Boeing 777 and flying out of virtually any airport in the world. Built on a foundation of realism that spans more than 17 years, Flight Simulator 2000 is the largest leap forward in the history of the franchise. You won't believe your eyes when you see the new 3D-scenery graphics system that provides incredible realism and immersion to every building, plane, landscape, and weather system. Surely, no holiday is complete without this all-time game winner!



Coming to DACS on December 15: "State of the Net." IBM's Vice President of Internet Technology John Patrick will share with us his insights about Internet developments during the first year of the new millennium.

Meeting Review

Suite Sensations

MGI's PhotoSuite III and Video Wave II

By Wally David

WORKING WITH GRAPHIC IMAGES and video on the PC has been a vexing problem for many people. While the tools available now are wonderfully powerful, they also require a steep learning curve and a big budget. And for many people, business- and home users, that can be a major problem. Adobe PhotoShop and Adobe Premier are the professional industry standards for photo editing and digital video editing, respectively. The key word is profes-

sional. If you are a graphics pro, you need to look no further. But if you are not, there is still hope for you.

MGI Software has two products that will be of great interest to the non-professional graphics and video editor. Randy Whittle of MGI came to the October General Meeting of the Danbury Area Computer Society to present PhotoSuite III and Video Wave II. Randy was a very personable presenter. He had a good sense of humor and a smooth speaking style. He did, however, have

President's File



For those who came expecting fireworks, Microsoft's short and businesslike display of Windows 2000 on October 20 was a less-than-rousing experience. After all, much of DACS' membership is made up of

casual users, and who but an IT nerd or a network administrator would revel in the intricacies of system resources, user rights, and firewalls. But even without subtitles, the complexity of the action on stage showed vividly how computers have come to script virtually every aspect of our business lives, and how Microsoft, through its innovation and competitive drive, has become such a leading player.

DACS and Microsoft have had a long and intimate relationship. We were one of about six user groups to participate in the North American telethon for the unveiling of DOS 6.0 in 1992, and one of about forty groups in the current Windows 2000 tour. We have played a significant role in the launching of Microsoft Office 4.0 and both Windows 95 and 98. In several of these efforts, Microsoft has gone out of its way to book hotel facilities and to publicize the events. This Microsoft connection has contributed immensely to the growing membership of DACS and to our preeminent status among user groups many times our size.

Microsoft has truly helped us become the "mouse that roared."

We can also testify to Microsoft as a caring company that has gone out of its way to help worthwhile causes. Its support for user group community programs has channeled \$30,000 through DACS to the Voice for Joanie, so that the paralyzed victims of Lou Gehrig's disease can have an artificial "computer" voice. The company has included Voice for Joanie on its short list of nonprofit organizations eligible for employer matching donations, and has gone out of its way to provide VFJ and DACS with software needed for our work. A year ago contributions from Microsoft enabled Voice for Joanie to extend its helping hand all the way to San Diego, California, so that a Lou Gehrig's patient could be given a PC, communications hardware, and a voice synthesizer to restore some quality to his last months of life.

Now, if you still want bells and whistles, come to our next monthly meeting on November 2, at the Danbury Hospital Auditorium. Microsoft will be back with some ideas on how you can stuff those stockings in December. Better get some stretch socks, because the choices will be irresistible: Encarta Encyclopedia 2000, Graphics Studio Home Publishing Suite 2000, Works 2000, and Flight Simulator 2000.

HRRA for DACS volunteers

A contingent of DACS volunteers showed up at the Danbury Green on Sunday, October 17, for the annual electronics recycling day sponsored by the Housatonic Resource Recovery Administration. The mission was to pick through tons of vintage PCs and peripherals for a few discarded gems. The expectation was that some would have a new life in an area school or as a deserving student's first PC. The rest would be trucked away to be stripped down and recycled.

As the line of vehicles stretched out onto Main Street and mountains of PCs began to form, the DACS booth came to look more like a field hospital, with volunteers desperately lugging, sorting, plugging and unplugging, and then moving pieces along. In the end, a small truck rolled away half-filled with reusable hardware and two huge trucks left with junk.

Thanks go to all the DACS volunteers who participated, but particularly to Marc Cohen and Larry Buoy, who stayed almost to the bitter end.

—ALLAN OSTERGREN
DACSPREZ@AOL.COM

Membership Information

Dacs.doc, ISSN 1084-6573, is published monthly by the Danbury Area Computer Society, 12 Noteworthy Drive, Danbury, CT 06810-7271. Annual subscription rates: \$25 to regular members, \$20 to students (included in dues).

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Send address changes to Danbury Area Computer Society, Inc., 4 Gregory Street, Danbury, CT 06810-4430.

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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 203-790-8620; (BBA3@exchange.co.westchester.ny.usa).

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Technical Support

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

Software packages used to publish *dacs.doc* include:

Microsoft Windows 98, Office 7.0, TrueType fonts,
Adobe PageMaker 6.5, CorelDRAW 6.0,
Calendar Creator+ for Windows
Internet services by MAGS.NET
Dacs.doc file transfer security provided by AVP.

Applications & Hardware to enhance *dacs.doc* are welcome.

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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

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Visual Basic	Nick Percival	(203) 438-9307	(d)
Windows 3.1	Nick Strother	(203) 743-5667	(e)

Directors' Notes

A Regular Meeting of the DACS Board was held at the Resource Center on October 11, 1999. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, Cohen, David, Gingras, Ostergren, Preston and Setaro. Chairman Wally David presided and Secretary Larry Buoy kept the records of the meeting. Minutes of the September 13 were approved.

Finance Treasurer Charles Bovaird informed the Board that a \$5,000 Certificate of Deposit had been purchased which when added to checking and postal accounts gives us a total cash position of \$16,445.37. Adding outstanding receivables of \$500 for advertising and postage on hand of \$60.56 gives us a total of \$17,005.93. Of this, \$9,862 represents an obligation of dues paid in advance.

Membership

Current membership is 546. Application forms from new members indicated that the majority had heard of DACS by word-of-mouth, followed by our Web Home Page and newspapers, etc. Jeff Setaro added that the Home Page had had 3,900 "hits" during September.

Recycling day volunteers

President Ostergren stated that the general membership's response to the plea of the HRRR for volunteers to help with the recycling or disposal of used computers during the "America Recycles" day (October 20) had been less than overwhelming. He circulated a sign-up sheet among the Directors for those who could assist in this program.

Y2K videotape

In the absence of Ed Here, President Ostergren advised that the videotape of the Y2K Conference held in May will be scheduled for viewing at area Senior centers and within the Danbury School System.

Microsoft 2000 event

Jeff Setaro reported on preparations for the special presentation by Microsoft of its Windows 2000 Customer Satisfaction Tour to be held at the Southbury Hilton Hotel on October 20. The DACS projector is to be set up at the Hilton, and the giveaways are to be shipped to him. He also would appreciate help packaging the giveaways (at 5:00 p.m.), with registration

Directors' Notes Continued on page 15

Tips

Introducing Some Resources You Didn't Know You Had

Your own private Microsoft HelpDesk

By Carol Daniels

When you are looking for information about obscure Windows error messages, problems with DLLs, virtually anything about Microsoft products, you need to know about the Microsoft Technical Support Knowledge Base (<http://www.support.microsoft.com/support>).

Sorting out misbehaving applications

You've probably seen at least one comedy routine where two characters arrive at a doorway at the same time and never make it through because they get caught in an endless loop, each one trying to let the other go first.

"After you," A says. "No, after you," says B "No, I insist, after you," A says. "No, really, I must insist, after you," says B.

Or how about the ones where neither character gives way and they both end up wedged in the doorway. Either way the result is the same. An impasse. That's the sort of confusion IRQ conflicts cause. IRQs (Interrupt Requests) are a way for programs to decide who goes first when more than multiple components require the same resource at the same time. If things can't be sorted out, one or both components may fail to work. Crashes are usually close behind.

Conflicts between IRQs are not always easy to sort out. There is help, however, in the form of a Microsoft diagnostic utility. It's called Microsoft Diagnostics (no surprise there) and it's included on your Windows 95 CD-ROM (look for the file MSD.EXE).

Quick now, what are your
system settings?

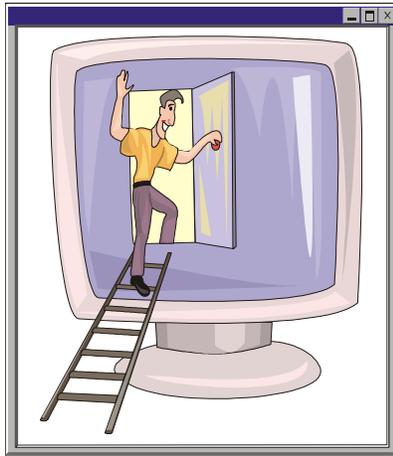
I have a fairly basic machine. Even so, I wouldn't even try to remember ev-

erything about my system settings. Windows tweaking alone is too much to memorize. All that information is useful to have, but I'm not going to memorize it, or write it all down. Life's too short. A recent backup can restore everything, but that may not be good enough for reference purposes, or if you need to send the information to a tech who is trying to help you solve a problem. There is a solution, Windows 95's built-in reporting feature.

Just click on Start, then Settings, Control Panel, and System. Once there, select the Device Manager tab. From this tab you can inspect the properties of each individual item, or select print for a System Summary or the full report, which supplies detailed information about all devices on your system.

As useful as these three resources are, I won't trade them for my membership in Melbourne PC. There is a lot of information here, but unless you have the wisdom of a Jedi master, you won't be able to decipher all of it on your own. Add them to the combined wisdom of your fellow members and you're on your way to turning information into knowledge.

This article is furnished as a benefit of our membership in the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization to which DACS belongs. The author, CAROL DANIELS is a freelance writer and editor specializing in science, technology computers, computing, business, health, medicine, food, and agriculture. She is on the Management Committee of the Melbourne PC User Group and a member of APCUG's Board of User Group Advisors.



New Members

09/21/1999 thru 10/19/1999

- 1) Michele L. Counihan
- 2) Ipe George
- 3) Raymond R. Hoyt
- 4) Richard Jablonski
- 5) Duane P. Kish
- 6) Marcy S. Kramer
- 7) Edward J. Rohe
- 8) Carl Russell Jr.
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MAGS-NET	203-207-5695
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IBM/ADVANTIS	800-888-4103
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MCI	800-550-0927
MICROSOFT NETWORK	800-386-5550
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NETCOM	800-353-6600
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List for informational purposes only,
not an endorsement of any service. 4

Further information?
Call Jim Finch @ 203 790-3654

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trouble with the interface of PhotoSuite III. According to Randy, the interface is dramatically different from the previous version. Considering he only received the new version a few days before the DACS meeting, he really did an admirable job.

After answering some preliminary digital-photography questions, Randy got down to the business of showing us PhotoSuite III. What struck everyone at the meeting was how simple and clean the new interface is. The software leads you through each task, from cloning to cropping to applying special effects, with step-by-step, on-screen instruction at the left side of the window. In fact, PhotoSuite III is laid out like the ever-popular Web browser, complete with Back and Home buttons along the top of the window.

While Randy gave an admirable run-through, I was glad to have a copy of PhotoSuite III to test out for myself. While I have used Adobe PhotoShop for a number of years, it usually takes me a long time to accomplish simple tasks, since I don't spend much time with the program. I thought I'd be a fair test subject, as I've am at least familiar with PhotoShop.

PhotoSuite III lets you bring pictures into the application in a number of ways. You can control your scanner or digital camera with PhotoSuite III, as well as pull them in from your hard drive and from the Kodak PHOTNET Online service if you are a member. Upon opening a photograph, a series of buttons pop up on the left side of the window. You can choose to rotate and crop, apply special effects, paint and draw, stitch photos together, and create a photo tapestry.

Three areas really caught my eye. The first was TouchUp. Choices in the TouchUp area let you remove the dreaded red-eye, remove scratches, wrinkles, and blemishes from a scanned photograph, and apply TouchUp filters. I chose a scanned photo of one of our family's puppies to see how quickly I could improve it. The dog has a black coat. In the photo, bits of dust that had been on the scanner bed when I scanned the photo showed up as small white flecks on her coat. I was able to remove these using the Remove Blemish tool. Using an on-screen slider, I simply adjusted the size of the brush to cover the small areas that I wanted to correct. Then I clicked on the flecks and they blended away. Then I used the Clone tool to remove a bright leaf from the surface of a wooden deck in a matter of seconds.

For the final touch, I pressed the Enhance button. This analyzes the image and applies whatever adjustments PhotoSuite III feels are in order. In this case, it punched up the color of the decking and slightly sharpened the overall image. All this took a matter of moments. I can't begin to tell you how long this would have taken with PhotoShop.

Something that Randy showed us that really drew audience approval was Auto Stitching. PhotoSuite III's Auto Stitching feature lets you create your own panoramic images. It seamlessly and automatically stitches up to five images. He showed us four pictures of a lighthouse. They were taken so that there was a bit of

overlap between them. He then stepped through the on-screen instructions, and within a few minutes he had a panoramic photo of a lighthouse. It was incredibly easy to do. I was able to recreate the same thing at home, since the photos he used were included on the CD.

There are many other features and effects that deserve mention, like the scores of templates that encompass a wide range of projects and the subtle color wash effects that put Ted Turner's colonization to shame. However, because of space constraints, I can't go cover all of them. I can tell you, however, that I don't see myself launching PhotoShop anytime

MGI Continued on page 15

Special User Group Prices!

Buy Today! Take advantage of the incredible value of MGI Software and avoid shipping and handling costs. You can pay by cash, check, VISA, or MasterCard. Please fill out this form and hand it to the presenter at the end of the presentation. The flat packs are the full product—all that's lacking is the empty space and the box.



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Shipping & Handling \$9.95 (Mail Orders Only)	S&H	\$ _____	
TOTAL		\$ _____	

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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If you don't take advantage of this offer today, you may order the products directly within one week of attending the user group meeting, but a \$9.95USD shipping and handling charge will apply. Priority Code MGI 151

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Video

Create Your Own "Blair Witch" Project

By Mike Kaltschnee

LAST MONTH we had a presentation by MGI Software's Randall Whittle, who demonstrated two great

programs, PhotoSuite III and VideoWave II (see Meeting Review by Wally David beginning on page 1). Since I recently bought a video capture board, I offered to review VideoWave II.

PhotoSuite III is a photo- and image-editing program not unlike PhotoShop or PaintShop Pro but much cheaper than either. You can get a special DACS price for it (see the offer in this issue of dacs.doc).

I got an older version of VideoWave free when I bought an ATI All-In-Wonder Pro video card (about \$130 at Costco). Although it is now considered an "older" video card, it still has great features such as video in and out, an advanced television tuner, the ability to record television channels onto your hard drive (like a VCR), and support for high-resolution s-video. I was able to install the video card and software in about ten minutes, and start capturing

video within about 20 minutes (after first moving my television and VCR closer to the computer).



I bought the card to help my niece produce a ten-minute video for her class. Oh well, I actually bought the card to update an older computer and her project was a good excuse to get a video capture card. The VideoWave software is simple to use and makes the most of icons and Help files. I was able to edit, title, and even add special effects to the movie without resorting to

reading the manual. The only problem I had was selecting the "codec" or video compressor. I selected a complicated one, and it increased the time to create the movie considerably. I probably would have selected the right one if I had read the manual.

I have done some simple video work for Web sites at my company, DeMorgan. We use a professional-level product called Adobe Premier that is a lot more complicated to learn, costs considerably more, and takes a lot longer than VideoWave II. Sometimes a simpler and

cheaper program is all you need. If you're a professional video producer, please don't send me hate mail—I know your \$10,000 system is probably better than VideoWave II, but it is all I'll need at home for a while.

With any project, a little planning pays off. I asked the girls what they wanted to do from start to finish. We skipped making storyboards (hey, we're not George Lucas, and I'm no artist), and moved on to writing a list of scenes on a yellow pad. The girls spent time taping their own video work and selecting scenes from a tutorial tape their teacher gave them. We then captured the video using the ATI software into different scenes. Using VideoWave we imported the clips and then started building the movie. We added titles and credits, and then put the clips into the movie. After that, we added special effects such as fades, wipes, and other transitions. It took a while to create the final version, which was an ".avi" file, a compressed movie format created by Microsoft.

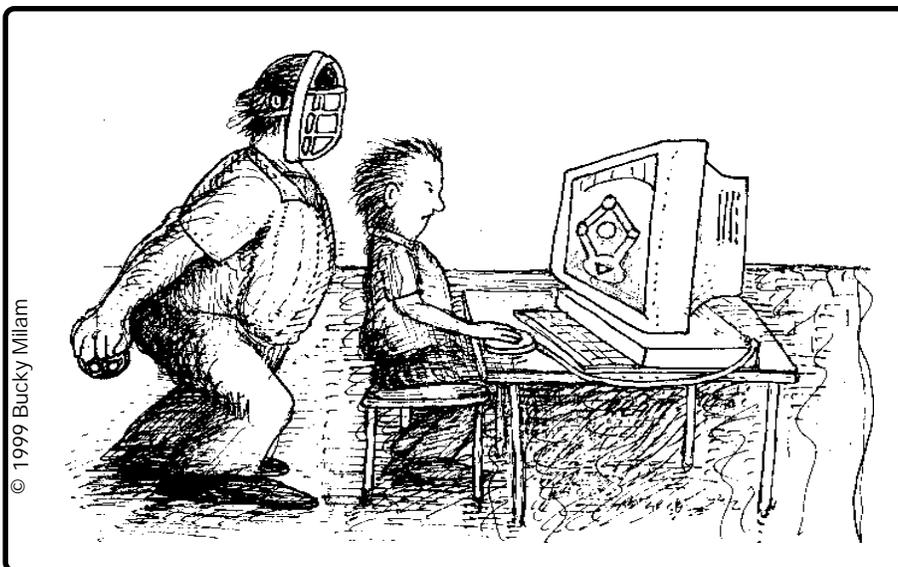
To get the movie back onto videotape we hooked the videotape recorder to the video output on the ATI videocard. Then we selected television output on the ATI card, and our Windows was output to my television so we could preview the results. Although the quality wasn't on par with a Star Wars film, it definitely got the girls an "A."

The requirements for VideoWave II are simple: Pentium 166, 32 megabytes of RAM, 2MB videocard, and about a gigabyte of free hard disk space (video work requires a lot of free space). I would recommend a faster computer, more RAM, and about a 2 or 3 gigabyte hard drive with lots of free space. You can get more information online at their Web site: www.mgisoft.com.

If you want to get a great image editor and a video editor, MGI is offering both for the price of most low-end image editors: \$75. Take advantage of this special offer and help us thank our sponsors for traveling to Danbury to give our presentations.

I had a lot of fun playing with VideoWave II. It would take a lot of time to create a movie like the Blair Witch Project, but you can easily create your own professional-looking videotapes using VideoWave II and a capture card

MIKE KALTSCHNEE is a founder of DeMorgan Industries Corp., the leading developer of Web graphics and themes at www.WebSpice.com. You can reach Mike at mikek@demorgan.com.



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Windows/NT Certification Prep Course in CT

ACSS Low-Cost Evening Course Emphasizes Hands-On Instructor-Led Environment

- WHY?:** Many good-paying jobs in computer-support these days require Microsoft Certified System Engineer status. Getting the time, money, and experience to take the necessary prep courses, and then passing the exams can be an overwhelming challenge for many computer-support specialists. However, the ACSS makes the task less of a burden on your time, by offering the preparation course for the certification exams in the evening, at a pace you can sustain (one 3-hour session per week), and at a price you can afford!
- WHY ACSS?:** The ACSS course, **priced at \$1250**, is being offered for about 1/3 the rate of most of the commercially available Microsoft Windows/NT Product Specialist courses. Naturally, the course *is for members only*, but joining is easy.
- FOR WHOM?:** You should be a current user of Microsoft Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, and use applications that run under Windows, such as Microsoft Office, WordPerfect, Lotus SmartSuite, etc.
- WHEN?:** The Windows/NT prep course will be offered in 30 weekly sessions, on Thursday evenings, starting November 4th, 1999. Class-times will be 6:30 to 9:30 p.m..
- WHERE?:** **The course will be offered at AMSYS Computer**, which is located at 900 Ethan Allen Hwy. in Ridgefield, CT.
- BY WHOM?:** The instruction is by the ACSS instructor staff, all of whom are Certified by Microsoft in the material they teach, and who are experienced instructors. Up to 12 students are accepted per class, and they must be ACSS members. The ACSS membership fee will be waived for DACS members.
- WHAT?:** Course materials are the Microsoft Windows/NT Technical & Administrative Training Kits for MCSE, Networking Essentials and Enterprise Networking. They include workbooks, copies of Windows NT-software, and tutorial software. They cover all material you need to pass the Windows/NT MCSE *required* exams. You will still need to pass exams in *2 electives* of your choice to receive the MCSE, and we offer those later. Very importantly, you also get your own 2 Gig swappable hard-drive, to install NT on and to use in class or at home. You pay \$200 for it, and can sell it back or keep it, at the end of the class.
- WHICH?** *A small selection of the course topics covered includes the following:*

The Microsoft Certification Process	Intro. to Sample Tests, and, Scheduling your Windows/NT Exams
Using The Windows/NT Training Kit	Installing Windows NT: Windows Components, INI files, PIF files
Windows-NT in Networks & Network Basics	Windows/NT System Architecture vs. Windows 95
Access-Control: Security, Permissions, ID	Workgroups and Domains, Domain Models
Hardware Requirements & Installation	Support for Protocols: NETBEUI, IPX/SPX, TCP/IP
Sharing Files, Printers & Other Peripherals	Migrating from & Connecting to Novell Netware
Local & Network Log-ons	System Maintenance: Backups/Restores, Updating Users & Drivers
Troubleshooting: The Registry, Backup/Restore	Boot Disks, Repair Disks, Error Event Viewer
Optimization: Virtual Memory, Multi-Tasking	Performance Monitoring, Memory Pools, Contingency Planning
Designing Network Topology	Estimating Server Resource and Cabling Requirements
Installing Applications Software	Planning Expansion: Adding/Removing Workstations & Peripherals
Remotely Accessing Networks	Studying Sample Exams & Getting Hands-On Troubleshooting <i>Practice!</i>

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Special Interest Groups

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

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

Next meeting: November 9.

ADVANCED OPERATING SYSTEMS. Explores and develops OS/2, Linux, and NT operating systems. For meeting notes and notices, follow link to Don's site on dacs.org.

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

Next meeting: November 10

EDUCATION. Coordinates DACS education classes.

Contact: Charlie Bovaird, 203 792-7881 (aam@mags.net). Meets as needed.

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

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

Next Meeting: November 24

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

Contact: Paul Gehrett, 203 426-8436, (pgehr4402@aol.com). Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Edmond Town Hall, Newtown.

Next Meeting: November 18

INTERNET. Acquaints DACS members with the Internet.

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

Next Meeting: November 17

MACINTOSH. Discusses Macintosh hardware and software.

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

Next Meeting: November 16

VISUAL BASIC. Develops Windows apps with Visual Basic.

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

Next Meeting: November 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 (voiceforjoanie@juno.com).

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

Next Meeting: November 30

WALL STREET. Examines new Windows stock market software.

Contact: Phil Dilloway, 203 367-1202 (phildilloway@juno.com). Meets on last Monday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: November 29

WEBSITE DESIGN. Designs and maintains dacs.org, the DACS Website.

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

Next Meeting: November 10

WINDOWS. Explores all aspects of Windows 95 and 3.1.

Contact: New SIG leader needed. Meets on 1st Friday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury.

Next Meeting: To be announced.

SIG News & Special Events

ACCESS SIG

The Access SIG continues with its 50/50 blend of theory and problem solving. We will investigate Menus and Tool Bars during the November meeting.

GRAPHICS

Any new members interested in learning about graphics imaging are invited to attend our meetings.

MACINTOSH

The Macintosh SIG will review two Macintosh Utilities: TechTool Pro 2.0 and Norton Utilities 4.0

INTERNET

The topic for our November meeting will be "Genealogy Sources on the Web," presented by the Danbury Public Library's John O'Donnell. We will meet at the DACS Resource Center.

VISUAL BASIC

At the October meeting, one of the Random Access questions centered on problems encountered when using the Form Wizard. The unanimous advice was to not use the wizard since it puts code in the form that you must later debug. The suggested approach is to add controls to the form yourself and then code the events and properties so that you know what is going on, and so have a basis from which to fix any problems.

Rich Rosner brought in another of his projects for SIG discussion. He had coded a DLL to read a digital torque wrench. The maximum torque reading on the wrench must be collected and recorded. Last month we discussed that because the readings must happen very quickly and not be delayed by activity in the main application, readings of this type should be done "out of process" using an Active-X Exe. An Active-X Exe is a ,COM component that can be started and controlled by another program. We then discussed how to add properties and events to a class module. These are used to control the module.

VOICE FOR JOANIE

During the nine years it has been in existence helping those suffering from ALS, Voice for Joanie has assisted 225 people in 104 Connecticut towns and eight people in seven New York State towns. At the present time we are helping 52 people. We are always in need of technical assistance and it would be especially helpful to have volunteers who would learn the programs we offer. These people could help with teaching, or be available to answer questions. Contact SIG leader Shirley Fredlund.

WINDOWS

November 1999

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																									
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Hexercise

Converting Hexidecimal to Binary

And to hex and back again

By April Miller Cripliver MCSE, MCP+I, MCT, A+

THE DECIMAL, hexadecimal, and binary numbering systems all start with zero. Our habit is to think of the "first" of something as being Number 1, but in the world of computers and technology, you'll need to become accustomed to that first thing being number 0.

If you remember your elementary school math, the number of digits that can fit into the units (ones) column is called the base. Decimal comes from the Latin "ten" and allows 10 digits in the ones column (0-9). Decimal numbering is also called base-10. When you have more than 10 digits, you cross over to the tens column.

In regular counting, we would start with a one and go to a nine. When we added one more number, we would put a zero in the ones column, and a one in

the tens column, making a 10. In computer math, we start with zero. When



we get to the end of the allowed numbers in the ones column, we go back to

the beginning, put down a zero, and move a one to the tens column.

Binary refers to base-2 numbers, in that there are only two units before you begin using the tens column. In base-2 numbering, you can only have a zero and a one in the ones column. There is no two, and you have to go to the tens column instead. One moves to the left of the zero after two digits, just as one moves to the left of zero after 10 digits in base-10 numbers (decimal).

There's actually no 10 symbol in decimal numbering either. The word we use to describe a one in the tens column and a zero in the ones column is ten. Ten is the same word in any base numbering, but we get to that 10 by more or fewer numbers in the ones column. In base-3 numbers, we would count zero, one, two, ten.

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Text counting in binary would be: zero, one, ten, eleven, one hundred, one hundred and one, one hundred and ten, one hundred and eleven, and one thousand. The same sequence in symbols would be 0, 1, 10, 11, 100, 101, 110, 111, and 1000, respectively. Because binary has only ones and zeros, there's no such thing as a two. The two is replaced by what we think of as a 10.

The largest eight-bit number is 1111111, which is made up of eight "ones," and converts a 255 in decimal. By amazing coincidence, the last character in the ASCII keyboard character translation table is 255—a blank space. On the other hand, decimal/binary zero is also a space, so maybe it's not that incredible.

Hexadecimal (hex) is base-16 numbering, where numbers in the ones column must go beyond 10 digits all the way to 16 digits. This requires the use of letters, since decimal numbering (base-10) has only 10 available digits: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, before making a 10. Hexadecimal (often abbreviated as Hex, H, or h) adds A, B, C, D, E, and F.

Counting a full sequence would be 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, A, B, C, D, E, and F. The F represents the "tens" column crossover point, just like the nine does in decimal numbers. In this case, 15 (the F) is the sixteenth digit and the last that can fit in the ones column. Don't forget that zero was the first digit.

Following F (in base-16) would come a "tens unit," so the next number is 10. The sequence continues as 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, and then another tens unit, making 20.

Hexadecimal numbering allows for cramming more information into a smaller space. For example, the decimal 255 (three digits) becomes FFh (two bits) in Hex. The small "h" following the number ensures that the reader realizes the number is in base-16 (hex).

APRIL MILLER CRIPLIVER holds several certifications and degrees in business and computer science. She is a trainer and computer consultant in Indiana. April welcomes e-mail from readers at april@cripliver.com.

Remember!
0 = No 1 = Yes

Sample Exercise:

Convert the decimal number 125 to binary, then to hexadecimal. We know that...

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1

You ask, "Can I take **125** - 128?" No. Therefore:

0	128
---	-----

You ask, "Can I take **125** - 64?" Yes. $125 - 64 = 61$. Therefore:

0	1	128	64
---	---	-----	----

You ask, "Can I take **61** - 32?" Yes. $61 - 32 = 29$. Therefore:

0	1	1	128	64	32
---	---	---	-----	----	----

You ask, "Can I take **29** - 16?" Yes. $29 - 16 = 13$. Therefore:

0	1	1	1	128	64	32	16
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You ask, "Can I take **13** - 8?" Yes. $13 - 8 = 5$. Therefore:

0	1	1	1	1	128	64	32	16	8
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You ask, "Can I take **5** - 4?" Yes. $5 - 4 = 1$. Therefore:

0	1	1	1	1	1	128	64	32	16	8	4
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You ask, "Can I take **1** - 2?" No. Therefore:

0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1

You ask, "Can I take 1 - 1?" Yes. $1 - 1 = 0$ * Therefore:

0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1

* The final equation ***must*** end with zero or you did something wrong!

Now, convert 1111101 to Hexadecimal. To do this...

Your final answer from the binary was **01111101** or...

0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
128	64	32	16	8	4	2	1

Separate the binary answer into quartets (from the right), repeating the first quartet's values, as shown:

0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
8	4	2	1	8	4	2	1

4 + 2 + 1 = 7

8 + 4 + 1 = 13

Add up all your "yes" answers (the 1's).

Since there is no 13 in the Hexadecimal numbering system, the 13 must be converted. Counting in base-16 gives you 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, A, B, C, D, E, F. Therefore, a "13" is represented by the letter D. So the answer to this portion of the problem is 7Dh.

Answer

125 decimal = 1111101 binary = 7D hexadecimal

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Security

Computer Fraud

By Lee Schwab

I TOOK ADVANTAGE of the opportunity to attend the Southwest Regional User Group meeting in San Diego on July 9-11, 1999. One of the best presentations I attended was by Terry Rankhorn, Special Agent, Cybercrimes Unit, FBI, San Diego. Terry's presentation was fascinating and scary. Below is some of the information he presented.

The FBI has developed a hacker profile based on their experience. The following description of a hacker lists the most common attributes first. The hacker is usually a student who uses the Internet every day, especially IRC. If the hacker has a job, it usually involves computers. He is usually quite knowledgeable of Unix. As a matter of fact, you will usually find several books on Unix in a hacker's room. The typical hacker is an adolescent white male.

Many things motivate the hacker. His curiosity pushes him to learn how to get around the Internet, firewalls, and whatever else he happens to encounter. Hackers gain prestige and bragging rights when they are able to break through a firewall or other obstacle. There is even a Website where they can post their accomplishments and gain a following. Some hackers are motivated by revenge for some perceived injustice, which they feel they have experienced. They may get the IP of the person causing the injustice and knock them off the Internet every time they get on. Because of their age, hackers are usually not motivated by politics or profit.

One of the most common targets of hackers is Internet Service Providers (ISPs) because they are easy to hack and have numerous user accounts. A hacker will break into an ISP and get one or more accounts and passwords. He may sell or trade the account information to other hackers. Unless the subscriber of the account reports a problem with the account, the hacker usually does not get caught. Most ISPs assign a different IP addresses every time you sign on, which allows anonymity for the hacker. Therefore, it is unlikely the Internet will ever be truly secure.

Other popular targets for hackers are universities, because many have powerful number-crunching computers like the Cray.

This number-crunching capability helps the hacker more quickly find the key that they are looking for. The university setting provides a perfect opportunity for the hacker. Many times (especially in smaller schools) the security is lax and there are numerous user accounts.

Government and military sites

are also popular targets among hackers because of the challenge, prestige, and publicity. If a hacker breaks into one of these sites, he gets big bragging rights and will probably post his accomplishment at attrition.org. Recently, it was reported that a hacker broke into the Pentagon. Terry said that what actually happened is that security was alerted that someone was trying to break through the firewall. When the hacker tried a different approach, security decided to take the system down. No breach of security was made.

If a person is denied service or experiences a perceived injustice, he may want to hack for revenge. This may require a low skill level and use of pre-made, downloaded tools. This type of hack could be called "Internet Road Rage". With wiretapping (sniffer) type hacks, a hacker uses a password sniffer to collect passwords and personal information. There are internal intrusions where the biggest threat is from within. These are different from classic external intrusions, where a remote intruder breaks into the computer.

All of the frauds that work through the mail work just as well, or perhaps even better, when using a computer. This is partly because of the feeling of anonymity on the part of the person committing the fraud and partly because people are sometimes embarrassed to admit that they were ripped off (especially at X-rated sites). Terry told a story about a man who advertised a projector for sale at one of the Internet auctions. Several people bid on the projector, and the auction site gave the seller the contact information for the top bidders. The

seller then contacted each of the prospective buyers and told them that the person above them had dropped out of the bidding and that they had won the bid. The seller received checks from several people, but none of the buyers received a projector. Was there ever a projector for sale? Who knows? The good news is that the seller was caught.

Pyramid schemes are a popular type of fraud on the Internet. You put your name at the bottom of a list and send each person on the list above you \$5. There is almost no chance that you will recover your money. Plus, you may have provided your e-mail information to a hacker. The same threat holds true for advance fee schemes. For example, you send \$19.95 to have your credit history repaired. You do not need to pay a fee to repair your credit and you may have given a hacker access to your e-mail.

Hackers can be prosecuted for mail fraud (Title 18, Section 1341) or wire fraud (Title 18, Section 1343). Wherever hackers or anyone else goes on the Internet, they leave a trail that can be followed by a savvy investigator. However, the investigator has to be alerted that there is a crime to investigate.

If you use a cable modem or are connected to the Internet all the time, be aware of who is accessing your computer. Terry gave an example of a friend who networked two computers in his home and uses a file server. Terry was easily able to look at the files on his friend's computer and could have caused major damage. Instead, he sent a message that appeared on his friend's monitor. What a scary wake-up call!

This only scratches the surface of what Terry covered during his presentation. The bottom line is, Use good common sense when using the Internet. If you feel you are at risk, you can download a shareware firewall from nukenabber.com. Happy surfing!

LEE SCHWAB has been an active member of the Napa Valley PC User's Group for many years and was an officer for ten years. She served as Editor of the *dVINE Blues* newsletter (7.5 years), President, Vice President, Publicity, Public Relations, Evaluations Coordinator, and Program Chair. PCs play an integral part of Lee's busy life outside the NVPCUG. She is the President and Chairwoman of the Board for the CyberMill, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization where people (especially at-risk youth) learn to use technology. She uses her PC to evaluate and track her extended family's investments and make stock trades. Lee feels very fortunate to work in areas that she likes (computing, investing, and volunteering) and will always be challenged and in learning mode. Published in the August 1999 issue of the *dVINE Blues Napa Valley PC User's Group*. This article is brought to you courtesy of APCUG.



Instant Replay—October 1999

Moderated by Bruce Preston

Q. A friend just purchased a new laptop computer. It came with an operating system but no application software. In looking in the stores and catalogs, almost everything that we find is an “upgrade” release rather than the “full product.” How do we get the first installation?

A. You qualify for the “upgrade” release if you own a copy of any of the qualifying products listed on the upgrade box. The qualifying product need not be physically installed on the machine; you only have to show proof of purchase. This can be in two forms. With some, showing/faxing the title page or first diskette to the vendor is sufficient. With others, the installation program has a “snuffer” routine that looks for qualifying products. Even then, the product need not be installed on the machine, since the snuffer will often instruct you to “browse” to the product’s location, which may be the installation diskette for the previous product.

Q. A related question: I have MS Office 95 and am considering Office 2000. Do I have to upgrade to Office 97 first before I can get to Office 2000?

A. No, usually the upgrade pricing will go back several major releases, including older releases of competitive products.

Q. When I purchased my machine, I asked for the upgrade pricing for Office, since the machine I am retiring has the suite. The dealer said that would cost more. Why?

A. Dealers get the OEM version of products such as Office at a deep discount. They would have to acquire the upgrade version individually without a volume discount.

Q. At “computer fairs” I see office suites marked “Not For Resale.” What are these?

A. Not for Resale, or NFR may be from several sources. They could be out-

of-date OEM overstocks being liquidated. Often the OEM versions do not include printed documentation. If it is the current release, they are more likely to be copies obtained through the educational resale pricing. These are copies intended for educational institutions, libraries, non-profit foundations, etc., and are intended to be sold only to people who meet the requirements. Sale to general “consumers” violates the software contract. There have also been cases of pirated software being sold, although the publishers are very active in watching for and prosecuting vendors of pirated software. While they have been successful in taking vendors to court here in America, they have been less successful in prosecuting piracy in countries that do not have or enforce intellectual property rights. Being enrolled in an adult education class may be sufficient to qualify for an educational discount.

Q. I recently purchased a Logitech Internet Keyboard and installed it on my Compaq desktop machine. I am having problems: for one, every time I move the mouse, the machine beeps! I worked with Logitech, and they eventually exchanged it, but I still have the problem. Logitech refers to the problem as a “beeping” keyboard. Does anyone else have one of these devices, and how does it work?

A. No one else was familiar with this device; it has only recently been introduced. The keyboard has extra controls for scrolling windows while browsing, adjusting the speaker volume, etc. The best suggestion we can make is to continue to work with Logitech. They are usually very responsive to user problems. You also might try calling Compaq to see if they have any reported problems, but don’t be surprised if they tell you that they only support their own keyboards.

Q. I’ve been getting e-mails from a friend for about a year, with no problem. Lately I’ve been getting messages containing extra characters such as “ ” that appear to be randomly sprinkled through the message.

A. Those are codes usually used in HTML to signal the browser that the blank is not to be removed. Your friend is using an ISP and a MIME-sensitive e-mail program, and further questioning revealed that you are using an older version of AOL’s mail client. You would be advised to update your client software. Until then, ask him to see if he can mark the text of his message to be sent “without style”. AOL also has a downloadable module that can handle MIME messages and attachments.

Q. I just upgraded Prodigy, and now when I start my Web browser it automatically goes to Prodigy.net as a home page. From there I can go to other places, but usually I don’t want to go to Prodigy first. How do I fix it?

A. It sounds like Prodigy cavalierly set the home page preference to its own home page. For Internet Explorer, select Tools on the main menu, then Internet Options, and select the General page. The upper portion of the properties page will let you specify Use Current, Use Default, or Use Blank as your start-up page. There is a similar mechanism in Netscape’s browsers.

Q. I have a laptop and it periodically goes into a suspend mode. I have disabled the screen saver via the Windows Desktop Properties and Suspend in the BIOS. What is causing the suspend?

A. Suspend is used to taking a snapshot of the machine and putting a machine into a “fast restart” mode so that you don’t have to go through a full boot. Turning it off in the BIOS is only half of the solution. You should also go into the Power

Saver settings. Look in the Windows control panel, and also look in the C-MOS BIOS settings.

Q. I am trying to install a software application that I use at work on my home machine. It reads the install floppy first, then the CD. Then it starts the installation and crashes. I have recorded the module and address of the crash. Any suggestions?

A. Sometimes it can be that the CD-ROM hasn't gotten up to speed in time and the software times out. To get the CD up to speed, you might try using Windows Explorer and take a look at the CD before the installation program calls for it. One tech support person suggested that you go to www.deja.com and put the module and address (such as Kernel c800:00001234) in the search window. Often this will reveal a known problem—and with luck a workaround. Recently this revealed a problem with a video driver. Another possibility is that the package has a restriction as to how many installations you can perform. If

it is using a diskette as part of the installation, it might have a copy/installation protection scheme in play.

Q. Has anyone tried using e-Scoop as an ISP?

A. Yes. Works fine.

Q. A Mac question: I am using an application (Word), and I would like it to remember to maximize the document window within the application. I can use the icons in the upper right corner to minimize, or to go to a sizable window. How do I get it to go to a "full screen" window?

A. If you are using the most recent release of the OS-8, the application will remember your preferences. So maximize the window by dragging the margin. It will then remember the size when you minimize and restore it to the size that you had.

BRUCE PRESTON is president of West Mountain Systems, a consultancy in Ridgefield, CT, specializing in database applications. A DACS director and moderator of the Random Access sessions at general meetings, Bruce also leads

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MGI Continued from page 5

soon. I don't really see the need. For more information on PhotoSuite III, you can visit the Website at www.photosuite.com.

Randy also gave us a brief run-through of Video Wave II. Like PhotoSuite III, Video Wave II sports a very user-friendly interface. Randy assembled a short feature on an ice-dancing couple. He combined videoclips, sound, and effects to achieve a professional looking video in a very short time. Look for a complete review of Video Wave II in Mike Kaltchnee's story later in this issue of `dacs.doc`. If you want even more info on Video Wave II, check out www.videowave.com.

MGI is well known for creating software that lets business and home users achieve professional-looking results without spending lots of time and money in the process. PhotoSuite III and Video Wave II live up to that reputation, and then some.

Wally David, DACS Chairman, is a DeskSide Support Engineer for GE Capitol IT Solutions. He also has a computer consulting business and can be reached via his Website at www.dcenet.com

<http://www.dacs.org>

Directors Notes Continued from page 3

to begin at 6:30 p.m. followed by the presentation beginning at 7:00 p.m. (Postcards to the general membership regarding this presentation were labeled and stamped prior to the start of this meeting.)

Elections

With respect to the upcoming election of directors at the December general meeting, Chairman Wally David and Dick Gingras agreed to act as a nominating committee to seek nominees for reelection or replacement of those directors whose terms will expire.

Indexing dacs electric

Larry Buoy suggested that the on-line version of `dacs.doc` might be more useful if it contained an index to the subjects covered in the archives. Jeff Setaro advised that in addition to its being a considerable task, establishing links to individual articles and to the Random Access feature would easily exceed our allotted space on the Danbury Library's server. Further consideration of the project, perhaps simplified to an indexed list of the

online issues online that can be manually accessed, was tabled.

UGN solicitation questioned

President Ostergren distributed copies of a solicitation for membership in a "User Group Network" which had been e-mailed to him. A cursory examination by the directors present resulted in comments that this "Network" appeared to have possible ulterior motives and that no action encouraging membership should be taken pending investigation.

—LARRY BUOY



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Future Events

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December 15 • IBM's John Patrick, The State of the Net
January 4 • New Deal 2000 Suite

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