SOFTWARE REVIEW FOR JULY ISSUE OF BUSSLINE
Parson's Technology
Family Origins
Submitted by Jim Trulock, Chairman, Genealogy S.I.G.

I guess some might be considered me somewhat "jaded" when it comes to Computer Software. Over the years I have made no secret of the fact that I believe that computer users have gotten the very dirty end of the stick from Software Developers. We have been sold, shoddy, defective programs, at astronomical prices and then were required to pay for what amounted to maintenance upgrades. As if that wasn't bad enough, we were then told we can't use them wherever we might want to!

As you can tell, I do not hold software developers close to my heart! So with this in mind, please read this review anyhow!

Of all of the Software companies around, one of the few that I do respect IS **Parsons Technology.** Their new program *Family Origins*, (May - 92) is a very good example of how they earned that respect.

First, they had to come up with a program that requires a lot of interface between database, screen overlays, and printing output devices. They succeeded quite nicely. Their data entry screens are clean, crisp and intuitively easy to use (And you can configure them in any colors of the rainbow you wish). The whole program flows from one family member task to another, or allows the user to "hop, skip and jump" around, if the desire strikes him. (The concept of an "Unlinked" person can really save you time in loading in a family member whose linkage is still unclear.) I might add, the program flows "very swiftly" as there is very little waiting for the program to "do its thing" One of the most interesting features is the program's ability to Link and Unlink individuals and families and to Delete Individuals and families and to "Re-arrange" children according to your own whims or by birth sequence.

This program comes with its own "GEDCOM" import and export capabilities. I don't know whether I was just lucky or not, but the transfer of data from another genealogy program to *FAMILY ORIGINS*, was clean, neat, correct and FAST!

All of the information was transferred and it was all in the correct place. One of the problems that I have had with most genealogical data base programs is that they never seemed able to add Source and notes information where and when I wanted to do so (If they could add them at all). *Family Origins* will allow you (if you wish) to put a source for EVERY single piece of data for every single event for every single person. Also, it has two different kinds of notes available. One, called the Short note, is a pop-up type box , which does not allow for great editing skills, but is just fine for those little notes you seem to write on the backs of match boxes or tiny pieces of paper. The other note, called aptly enough, the Long note, is really a Word processor memo with 2000 lines of text available for each entry.

Regarding output. The number, quality and ease of printing charts, reports, summaries, forms, lists and LDS Church Ordinances was almost mind

numbing.

Ancestor, Pedigree, Descendent charts (both Single and Cascade), Family Group Records, Individual and Family Summaries. Status lists, Notes, Sources Individual Listings, Birthdate Listings, Marriage date listings and Indexes galore. The amount of output information and choice of formats is outstanding.

The program has some pretty nifty options, like Zoom on Start up, where you can indicate not only which pedigree chart comes up during start up but also how many generations you want it to display. It is possible you might like to install and run other programs from the main menu of Family Origins, WITHOUT leaving the program. No problems, just use the User Install Option. Perhaps you find you want to change the Root person from one ancestor to another. Just select the Options Root Person, call up a search table, and take your choice. It could be that somewhere during your input you accidentally put the same person in twice (as in your great, great, great grandmother is also actually your great, great, great, Aunt !) Just open up the /Tools Merge Two people option and merge the info you collected on both entries into one. The point I am trying to make is just this. This is a program that is a rarity in today's market. It is well written, it is easy to input data, it is magnanimous in its helpful attitude, the program itself takes up fewer than 400k bytes (not in the megabyte range), the output is outstanding and IT HAS GREAT DOCUMENTATION! The only suggestion that I would make to Parsons is "Put the Documentation on 8 1/2 x 11, three ring notebook punched paper." It is not hard to read the way it comes, but it is small enough to get lost in my "computer room"!

I haven't fallen in love with a computer program yet, but I have come to admire this one in a very short time!