

security software with the book makes this no deviation. Both are correct.

Drawing on her many years involvement in the data processing *cum* productivity industry, the author provides insights that many people in the youth predominated field will find interesting, and perhaps even useful. Not all readers will be interested in all portions of the book, but that fact is acknowledged. Read the parts you like/need, and regardless of your current level of expertise, you're all but guaranteed to come away from the experience better for the effort.

V.I.R.U.S. is divided into three parts. Although the placement of information may seem odd at times, the general breakdown by historical, informational, and preventive/diagnostic criteria is adhered to. Readers who choose to peruse the book cover to cover will be impressed with both the authors knowledge and insight, and her ability to translate what is usually a technical and (to the uninitiated) boring topic into a dissertation appropriate for anyone. This reporter happens to count several inveterate computerphobes among his close friends and family, but even some of them were interested in *V.I.R.U.S.* and walked away from a reading better informed and more comfortable.

The author's creation of the acronym used for the book's title is amusing, misleading, and indicative of her attitude all at the same time. Even those completely disinterested in computers are all too familiar with the word "virus" as it applies to computers, courtesy of some sensationalistic press that has surfaced in the last several years (documented, of course, in the book). Ms. Kane's appropriation of the word for her own uses illustrates her well presented opinion that viruses are the least of most computer users' worries. The real danger lies in complacent attitudes and bad practices. Much like the relationship between practicing safe sex and AIDS, safe computing can virtually eliminate the dangers of contracting a virus.

We are told that periodic (and the shorter the period, the better) backups, preventive measures such as eliminating static electricity, and common sense are the basic building blocks in establishing a program of safe computing, and while space is devoted to anecdotal recounts of several of the better known virus scares, it is made clear that these incidents account for a remarkably small number of problems compared to users' suspicions. Yes, Robert Morris Jr.'s ARPAnet incident is reported. Yes, he's painted as a very smart young man who given enough time and resources could probably do damage to the domains of all but the most technically advanced, but time and again, Ms. Kane puts across her message: backup, backup, backup. With the book weighing in at some 400 pages, those who read *V.I.R.U.S.* cover to cover will be either converted to Panda disciples or completely fed up with the message.

Included with *V.I.R.U.S.* is a disk containing *DR. PANDA UTILITIES*. While useful, the technically oriented documentation prevents these tools from achieving the panacea status claimed for them. This is not for lack of trying; over one hundred pages of *V.I.R.U.S.* are devoted to the utilities. Unfortunately, even in their most primitive configuration the tools are mostly useful to the very well versed, and while that fact is admitted, little is done to rectify the situation. Even so, the safety level contributed to by use of such programs as *Monitor*, *Physical*, and *TSRmon* is admirable, and if you've got a friend who can help you interpret the results of using the programs, you may one day be very thankful for *PANDA UTILITIES*. Either way, *V.I.R.U.S.* is worth the read.

FastPak Mail
BLOCPublishing

The timing of this article's appearance in

IYMSR may appear to be anything but, but allow us to assure to that it is strictly coincidental. How you perceive its findings is strictly up to you.

If your needs for data maintenance and manipulation generally go no further than mail/phone list management, *FastPak Mail* may be all the database you ever need. That's a good thing for users who fit the description offered above, because getting *FastPak Mail* to communicate with other software is bound to frustrate. Why? Although the functions exist within *FastPak Mail* to carry out such communication, the (too) short and not very clearly written user's manual doesn't help much, and many users will throw up their hands before accomplishing any useful interfacing.

That said, here's the verdict: *FastPak Mail* is very good at what it does, and what it does it streamline and maximize the efficiency of your mailing activities. Product speed may preclude using *FastPak Mail* with large mailing lists, but all but the most demanding mailing personnel will be happy with the product.

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FastPak Mail is delivered on three 360 kilobyte and two 720K diskettes in the same package. The batch file driven installation process (you can elect not to use it; clear instructions are provided) basically performs several "copy *.*" commands, but works only for users who want the program stored on drive C: in a directory named "FPMAIL". Although a file listing is provided, the interactive nature of the product (its composition of many individual programs called from a main menu) makes pruning the directory of unneeded files impractical. The result? About a megabyte of hard disk space is used by *FastPak Mail*. Besides the reference oriented user manual, a short "tutorial on a card" accompanies the product. It is the closest thing to cohesive instruction in the product, but covers only a scant few of *FastPak Mail's* features. Fortunately, a menu structure card is also provided, and this card covers the generally self-explanatory system satisfactorily.

Simply put, *FastPak Mail* incorporates procedures for sorting (by multiple parameters) and printing your mailing list, using your choice of included templates or others you define. Labels, envelopes, letterhead, or just about any other material may be