Drawing Net profits

Gordon Laing, a diehard disbeliever, has seen the light. He's found that the Internet opens up a whole new world of DTP and graphics possibilities.

I've resisted long enough. I'm sorry, but this month I'm doing graphics and DTP on the Internet. I used to feel as many people still do, and steered well clear of the services and information on offer over the World Wide Web. But recent experience has turned me into a new convert, an Internet evangelist fully embracing the global network.

My first brush with the Internet came while installing Windows 95 and finding it not wanting to run my bog-standard Diamond Stealth video card at anything other than VGA mode. My last desperate attempt for a solution was looking up the Windows 95 help pages on the Internet, where I found video drivers and a page devoted to Diamond's products. A rather obscure tip later and I was running at high resolution, in lots of colours, flicker free, as I had merrily been doing with Windows 3.1.

If this information was on offer, what other gems could be found? Always your humble servant I surfed away, and have returned with the best graphics and DTP pages I could find. While this month is predominantly concerned with pages offering tips, hints and frequently asked questions (FAQs), I'll write in the coming months about what makes a Web

Adobe PageMaker 6. Notice the new multiple master pages, Quark XPress style

page look good, what graphics work best, and display the finest examples of beautifully designed, but easy to view Web pages.

A brief mention to anyone interested in the Internet but not certain how to get online: check out our *Cutting Edge* section every month, before this *Hands On* section. There you'll find features, hints and tips about the Internet, along with regular CD-ROM and general entertainment reviews and features.

Photoshop update and PageMaker 6
Adobe has been busy with what are arguably its two major products: Photoshop and PageMaker. The former has a new update named version 3.0.4, with

enhancements on both PC and Macintosh platforms. Both platforms have the following new features: a scratch disk efficiency indicator showing the amount of time Photoshop hits your hard disk, support for TWAIN 36/48 bit scanners, and improved support for Illustrator files. I quizzed Adobe about the seemingly abandoned Illustrator for Windows and got the usual "Yes, we know, we'll try to get a new version out soon and get both Mac and Windows versions out simultaneously in the future." Adobe had better be quick in carrying this out, because Windows users currently have a wide choice of excellent drawing packages: MacroMedia FreeHand 5, CorelDraw 6, Xara Studio and Xres to name but a few. Many of these are already

enhanced for Windows 95.

Specific to Photoshop for Windows 3.0.4 is optimisation for Windows 95 such as support for long filenames, right mouse button configuration to the commands palette and registry of application and file icons. Photoshop 3.0 was a 32-bit application which can run under Windows 95, but the 3.0.4 update is said to be specifically designed to take fuller advantage of Windows 95.

Macintosh users of 3.0.4 can look forward to better support for the new PowerPC 604-based machines boasting many speed improvements, and new plug-ins including a superior PhotoCD import. Registered users of Photoshop 3.0 will have the 3.0.4 update dispatched free — it's available immediately.

Adobe is gearing up for the launch of PageMaker 6, just over ten years after the shipping of the original PageMaker 1; interestingly, PageMaker 6 has won Best of Show at the August MacWorld show in Boston. Adobe is citing more than 50 new enhancements, although perhaps of most interest to this month's column is version 6's ability to author HTML (HyperText Markup Language) documents for electronic publishing on the Internet. In line with Adobe Acrobat, PageMaker 6 will also be able to create publications in Acrobat PDF format.

Other highlights include colour correction and sharpening of PhotoCD images, Kodak Precision Colour Management System (KPCMS) and multiple master pages (like Quark XPress). Plus, PageMaker 6 can apply Photoshop plug-ins to images. Aldus Additions have changed format, and at the time Adobe briefed me, it was unknown whether PageMaker 5 Additions would be compatible with PageMaker 6. However, Adobe will upgrade all the standard Additions, so this shouldn't be a problem.

PageMaker 6 ships on floppies and a Deluxe CD-ROM, the latter including the Acrobat Distiller and Reader. The Macintosh and Power Macintosh version should ship in early autumn 1995 and the Windows 95 version shortly afterwards. Bad news is that all versions need at least 12 to 16Mb of RAM, but the good news is that you can upgrade from absolutely any version (not cross-platform, however) for the bargain price of £99.

DTP delights
Back to the information superhighway. The first thing I did to research this brief foretaste of the fruits on offer was to perform a NetScape Net Search on DTP —
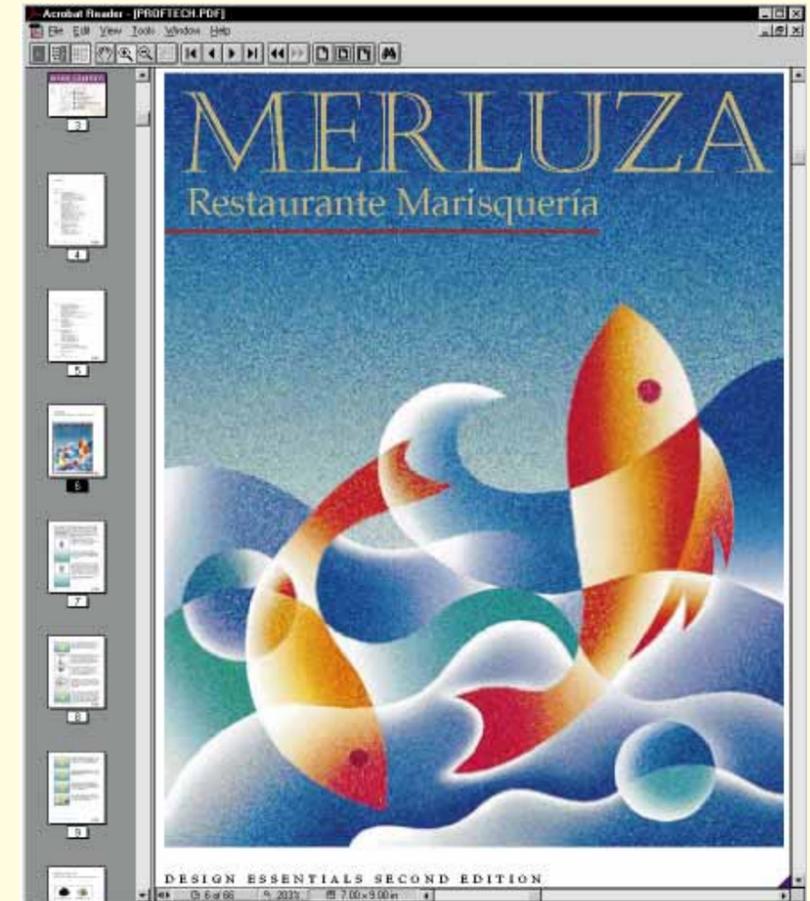
graphics didn't get me very far. The most promising information was a page of DTP-related links provided by European imaging bureau Switch On. Primary links are to the Adobe and Corel home pages, but there are also good links to independents covering PageMaker, Quark XPress, and DTP packages in general.

Adobe's pages are very well designed with lots of nice — and quickly loading — iconic links to various subtopics. You can find out the latest news (at the time of writing, the aforementioned PageMaker 6 and Photoshop 3.0.4) and learn more about the company, its products, support and training.

Best of all are the tips and tricks pages consisting of many downloadable Acrobat files; if you don't have Acrobat, a suitable reader can be downloaded for free. Most of the PDF files range from 1Mb to 3Mb so you could be in for a lengthy download, but the results are worth it. The 3.5Mb Professional Studio Techniques is a 66-page PDF file covering 14 selected techniques from *Design Essentials*, *Imaging Essentials* and *Production Essentials*, books

Visit Adobe's Web pages and you will be able to download Acrobat PDF files of hints and tips

from Adobe Press.

As you would hope with Acrobat, the files look on screen as they do on the pages of the books, even if you don't have the correct fonts installed. If the idea of downloading large files puts you off, you should check out all three of these books at your local store — they are brilliant.

Corel's official pages are still under construction but the unofficial ones look good. Of note is Chris Dickman's Corel-NET, with links to a huge range of information including bureaux, user groups and discussion areas. CorelDraw 6 for Windows 95 is to be launched soon.

Font fanatics should look no further than the address of frequently asked font questions listed at the end of this column. It may not look like much on the surface, but here you'll find links to a huge amount of information that should satisfy the most obscure enquiries.

Graphics and DTP on the Internet

Above *Adobe's home page with links to lots of downloadable PDF files*

Left *Everything you ever wanted to know about Corel is available on CorelNET*
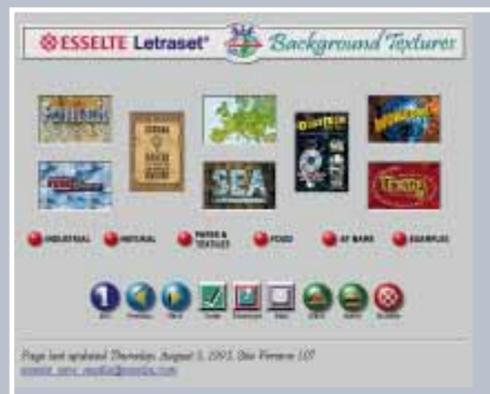
**Above** *Sample and download background textures from Letraset*
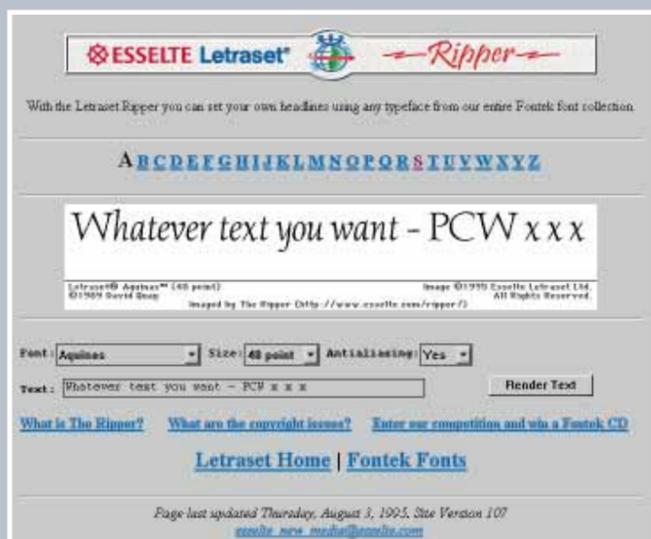
Above *Letraset's Ripper online utility allows you to sample any of its Fontek fonts using your own words*

Right *Alternatively, you can view a standard character listing. Here's La Bamba from the Fontek collection*

Saving the best until last, here's my favourite find during this month's surfing. It is none other than the fabulous Esselte Letraset Online pages. Esselte is a Swedish company consisting of three major brands: Letraset (graphic supplies), Dymo (labelling products) and Pendaflex (suspension filing). Although Esselte's largest earner is office products, I'm more interested in Letraset.

As you'd hope from Letraset, all the pages are beautifully designed, not just the home page. They have lots of lovely icon links and great graphics overall without sacrificing access and download speeds. The home page at the time I was looking (Letraset updates its pages every month so they're well worth a regular visit) consisted of five main sections, including a springboard to related sites.

Ripper is an excellent idea making good use of the unique facilities of the Internet. It allows you to view any typeface from the Letraset Fontek collection, but using a line of text which you type in. Looking at alphabetic listings is no match for seeing your own words set in the desired face. It's obviously no good for printing or Letraset would rapidly go bust, but the anti -aliasing techniques used really offer an effective view on-screen. You can also view conventional alphabetic listings of the Fontek collection.
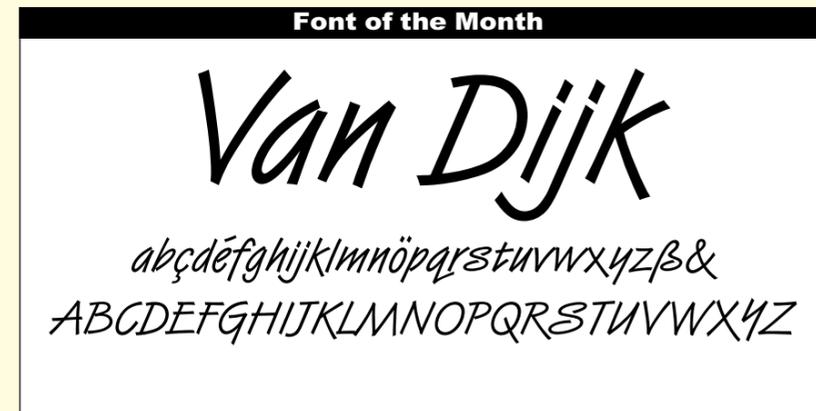
Catch Of The Month sounds most promising, and this is where you'll find lots of free products to download – yes, free, and remember these items change on a monthly basis. During August there was a demo of Letraset's Envelopes plug-ins for Macintosh Illustrator and FreeHand, and a free Character Chooser desk accessory for Macintosh. This displays a selected font's entire character set including accented, alternative, ligature, special, or symbol varieties.

But best of all, every month there is a different Letraset font to download for free. I contacted Letraset who agreed to let me know what October's font would be. Consequently, if the timing is right, our Font of the Month is one you can have for free from the Fontek collection courtesy of Letraset.

Font of the month
Just my type this month is Van Dijk, which should be the featured font for October in Letraset's Internet Web pages. You can download it free of charge in TrueType or Type-1 formats for either PC or Mac. Designed by dutchman Jan Van Dijk, it's a friendly-looking typeface ideal for all those situations where traditional designs may come across as too conservative. Get on that modem now!

Font of the Month

Van Dijk

abçdéfghijklmnöpqrstuvwxyzß&
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
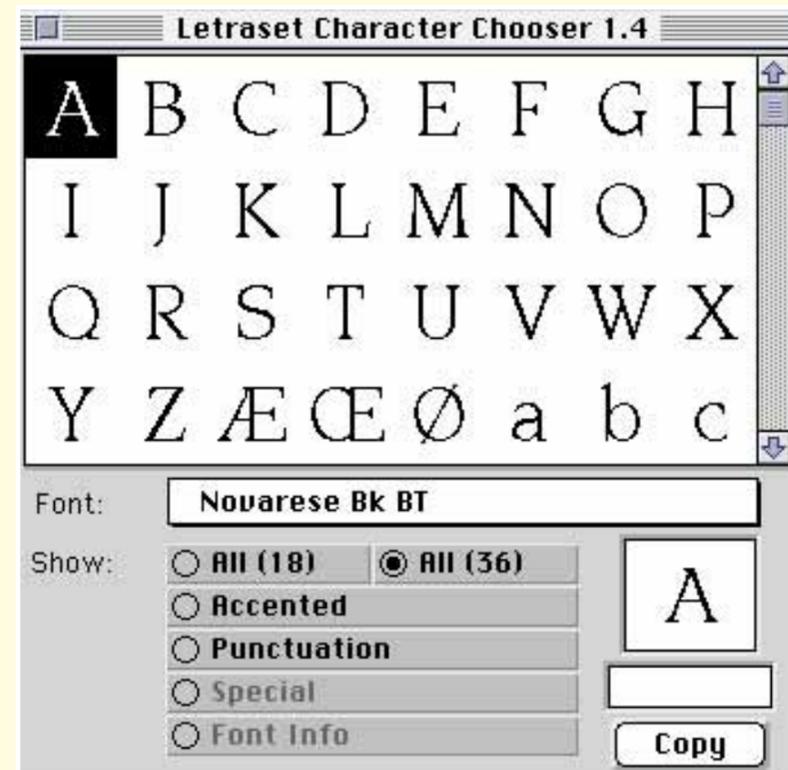
Along with free fonts, Letraset offers this useful Character Chooser utility, downloadable free from its Web pages

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