

FOCAL POINT

Peripheral Visions

If you look up *peripheral* in Digital Webster™ you'll find this definition:

²**peripheral** *n*
(1966)

:a device connected to a computer to provide communication (as input and output) or auxiliary functions (as additional storage)

Sounds right, doesn't it? After all, most people use ^aperipheral^o as an adjective meaning ^aauxiliary or supplementary.^o That seems to agree with Webster's definition.

Ironically, though, ^aperipheral^o equipment is often essential to getting real work done: It's *required*, not supplemental. Just imagine trying to work a whole day without a printer, hard disk, or monitor. More and more, people are relying on modems, faxes, and other peripheral devices in much the same way.

These devices are so critical to us that the buses that connect them to computers are fine-tuned or even designed from the start to suit particular needs. For example, the PCI bus is intended mainly for the multimedia industry and other high-end applications; PCMCIA was designed with portables in mind.

What this means is that it's more important than ever to plan ahead when you purchase a PC: You need to make sure that what you get today will continue to suit your needs a year from now (or at least for the next few months).

With that in mind, we've devoted much of this issue to helping you come up to speed on the latest, hottest PC buses—how they came into being, where they're headed for the future, and how NEXTSTEP supports them. So read on to find out what's on the way.

—Cynthia Closkey, Editor

