

MG: Mudgeon on Games

by Mudgeon

I don't know about you fine folk, but allow me to postulate if America Online continues to send sign-on disks to every household in the United States at the rate that has been evident of late, there will be no blank 3.5-inch disks available for consumers to format and use for their personal use! A veritable storm of AOL sign-on disks, whether Macintosh or Windows clients, have besieged homes and business for the last month or so. Most impressive-and at times, annoying, especially if you already HAVE an account on AOL.

Then just try to find sign-on disks for Prodigy or GENie. What are these services, embarrassed to have folk sign on or what? They're tough to find and certainly are buried in the latest AOL storm of disk dumps. Add-in a hope to get onboard with CompuServe or perhaps even a local BBS and you have to search like crazy to obtain such information.

Well, happy news for all of you would-be and current digiwalkers who wish to cruise cyberspace. From Global Village comes an all-encompassing title called On-Line Discovery. Although certainly not a powerful piece of programming, what Global Village does manage to offer is an all-in-one environment that offers consumers a variety of online access on one CD-ROM. Plus, the offering includes some of the greatest and biggest local bulletin board services available AND a really cool fax telecom program.

This is what you receive: software for Prodigy, GENie, Reuters Money, NETCOM Internet, CompuServe, America Online, bulletin boards and the aforementioned fax program. In fact, the NETCOM Internet software is soooo cool, I signed up for the service based upon its inclusion and presentation in this offering.

When you install the program under Windows, you receive a main menu that allows you to install any of the services to your hard disk drive. Separate "offers" are included in the package that present free hours of access to the included services. The only service that didn't seem to cooperate with the program was GENie, but then I figured that was just natural for that brain-dead online environment. (Why on Earth MicroProse selected GENie for their upcoming Magic: The Gathering online game is beyond me! Just an editorial aside . . .) There was no password, no logon info, on the pre-printed card that came inside the Online Discovery manual.

The fax and communication software program are easy-to-use and quite powerful. For this feature alone, plus Netcom's NETSCAPE, I would say this program should definitely be a high purchase consideration for any consumer that wishes to try a variety of online connections. For those who are already involved, in a comfortable manner, with the online community, whether via an online service or your own WWW cruising software, this program offers little other than the fax product and wouldn't be worth your investment. Definitely, On-Line Discovery is as its name implies, a means by which new computerphiles can explore and enjoy a variety of services quickly and easily.-Mudgeon