CyberNews

Welcome to the crowning issue of CyberNews! We are glad that you have joined us to explore what is new in the world of CyberSpace!

What you will find in this issue:

Feature Articles

Reviews

People

Editorials

Classifieds

Apogee Press Release

CyberNews -

1) a new exciting frontier in the world of electronic publications
2) the best thing to come along since the Personal Computer
3) an invention by the geniuses Patrick Grote and Roger Klein

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The Editors Speak

OK, so not everyone's idea of fun is to start an electronic publication, pour money into and offer it up to the harshest critics available . . . readers.   It all started with a simple idea.   Almost instant views, news and reviews delivered electronically via cyberspace in a format anyone can enjoy; from the highest end Windows NT system running on an Alpha box to a lowly IBM PCJr limping along at 300 baud, you should be able to read and enjoy CyberNews!   That's when I teamed up with Roger Klein, a person who shared the same idea.   Call us visionaries, seers, pioneers.   The fact remains it is one thing to have an idea, an entirely other matter to make it a reality.   You can't do it alone.

The reason CyberNews exists is to allow consumers to read real reviews about real products by real people. Not over inflated huff and puff about some vaporware piece that you can't go out and buy.   We also throw in a few features and interviews to keep the publication lively!

Our first issue is brimming with over 25 polished reviews penned by real people who have used these products.   We bring you reviews in a variety of fields, so that all your interests can be met.   Scott Miller, the dynamic personality who created Apogee, of Castle Wolfenstein and Blake Stone fame, appears in our first interview.   Together with features on programmers and individual expression, you are sure to enjoy every last word you read!

To get here has been a team effort.   In the true 90's spirit this has been a family affair based in two homes separated by real space.   The Klein clan are the production duo responsible for assembling, editing and publishing CyberNews.   Roger and Laura.   Laura and Roger.   Never mind who gets first billing, they have spent the better half of the last month making sure what you receive is a quality product.

The other family involved is the Grote group.   Myself and Missy form the administrative, marketing and distribution side of the business.   We handle making sure what Laura and Roger produce can be paid for, meets the consumer's needs, meets the advertiser's needs and is distributed and supported.

Individuals from around the country, heeding the call to write honest reviews, joined us in scouring over the various software that is available.   Without their contributions you'd just be reading this editorial.

Our first advertisers, even the ones who thought we were nuts, deserve some applause.   Electronic publishing is the leading edge in publishing.   Advertisers who sow the grains of hope in CyberNews will reap the bushels of new customers and interest we can generate!

So to all reading this, welcome aboard.   We promise not to bore or lecture, not to blindly promote or advance, not to needlessly cajole or flatter.   We will strive to bring you a fun to read, get something out of publication monthly!

Patrick Grote, Publisher, CyberNews

CyberNews

Where to find us...
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X File's Files

"Field Report 4301. Agent Cox reporting. Seems the best source of information on Mulder and Sculley's activities is X File's Files for $20.00 a year. I risk my career in the bureau for . . . "

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All Kinds of Stuff!

The End of Programmers?

Commentary on Rush Limbaugh, Bill Clinton, & Howard Stern

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Classifieds

Bargain, Buy, and Barter
Classifieds

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Telnet, Archie, Gopher and FTP available from MurkWorks, Inc. Works with almost every BBS including PCBoard, Wildcat, TBBS, MajorBBS, Searchlight and more. 315-265-4717 or info@MurkWorks.com.

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INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT "THE VISIONARY" MILLER
by
Patrick Grote

CyberNews is a reflection of how we communicate in cyberspace.   Understanding this, we want our interview section to reflect a new age method of exacting answers from people.

In the coming months, we'll interview people via email, Internet Relay Chat, BBS based Chat, CompuServe CB and many other methods.   Interviewing via cyberspace allows your interviewee to reflect on their answers and deliver a more powerful message.

CyberNews: Our first interview is with a leader is his field; a person who single-handedly turned a money losing field into one of the most profitable in the cyberspace arena.   Scott Miller, President of Apogee,   is a visionary who saw an opportunity and grabbed it, or as Scott explains it:

Scott Miller: "It was all dumb luck!   I saw an opportunity to release some games I had created onto BBS's and request money.   First, I released Beyond the Titanic, an Infocom-style text adventure.   Beyond made about $100 in its first year.
A year after releasing Beyond, I released Supernova as shareware, a very advanced text adventure game.   Still, it made very little money for me.
Then, in 1987, I had developed three Kroz games and I was on the verge of letting them all go out as shareware, when it occurred to me to release just one Kroz game (Kingdom of Kroz) and have it advertise the other two for $15.   I was simply tired of giving away   my games for free--since no one ever paid for them--so here was a way to make people pay.
It worked.   That first year I made over $30,000 and in 1989 I quit my job and started Apogee full-time, even hiring my mom to help process orders."

CyberNews: Of course, this begs the questions, why was the game so successful? The "trilogy" approach?

Scott Miller: "The short answer is yes.   We call this trilogy approach the 'Apogee Model', since so many other companies, like Epic, MVP and Id, are using it.   We feel like this model is responsible for the success of games in shareware, and we deserve the credit for inventing it."

CyberNews: OK, now for the standard question for anyone in the PC biz.   How did you get started in the PC business?   How long have you been in it?

Scott Miller: "I've been programming games since 1975.   I bought a Commodore PET in 1978,

later a C-64, then in 1981 an IBM PC.   My career path, on the other hand, always involved games in some way.   In 1982, George Broussard, Apogee's co-owner, and I co-wrote a book on beating arcade games.   Later, we both became managers at a video arcade.   I went on to write a weekly computer column, "Computer Fun," in the <u>Dallas Morning News</u>   for four years, plus two dozen articles for computer magazines, like <u>COMPUTE!</u>.   This all turned out to be very valuable training and experience in running Apogee."

CyberNews: No one can just "do computers" all the time.   Do you hit the golf course? Play a little ping pong?   What?

Scott Miller: "I love high energy sports, like tennis, basketball, and especially snow skiing. Lately, ping pong and paint ball have been mini-passions.   I'll save golf for when I'm much older!"

CyberNews: "Do the words Pearl Jam mean anything to you? What type of music are you in to?"

Scott Miller: "Nowadays, I find that I listen to talk radio most of the time.   I can't take hearing the same songs over and over again that they play on the radio.   My favorite groups are Rush (pre-1985) and Joe Satriani.   If it's not hard and heavy, I won't listen to it.   I have a huge drum set, too, which I use to vent tension about once a day."

CyberNews: Just for grins, what kind of car do you drive?

Scott Miller: "I have three cars.   A '91 Nissan 300ZX Turbo with over $12,000 worth of aftermarket stuff, like a very powerful Alpine system, 13 speakers, etc.   This is my fun car.   The family car (I married eight months ago) is a '93 Lexus SC400, plus I recently bought a '94 Grand Jeep Cherokee Limited, for the ski season coming up. :)"   Ed. Note: Success has its rewards . . .

CyberNews: Of all time, what are your top five PC based games?

Scott Miller: "I love these questions!   The first game that pops to mind is M.U.L.E.   After that I have to think.   In reality, I don't play many PC games at all.   Instead, I play arcade games and cartridge based games.   Those are the games that Apogee tries to release.   Let's see, to round out the list, I'll pick Prince of Persia, Stellar 7, Space Quest III and Planetfall."

CyberNews: How does Apogee select game ideas?   Developers?

Scott Miller: "We always keep an eye out for demos, etc., that appear on bulletin boards.   If we see something really impressive, we contact the author and see if they are willing to work with us.   We also get a lot of submissions, but most are not worth pursuing.   Game ideas are a dime a dozen.   It's more important to find a talented programmer capable of pulling off an idea."

CyberNews: How big is your family?   Kids? Ages? (of the kids :-))

Scott Miller: "Got married last November.   I have a three year old adopted son through that

marriage."

CyberNews: Why start 3D Realms?   Is this just a more polished Apogee?   What is your day to day involvement with 3D Realms?

Scott Miller: "3D Realms is a new division of Apogee, headed by George Broussard, that will focus exclusively on cutting-edge 3D game development.   We decided that 3D games are an exploding market, and it would be better to have a new and separate entity dealing with it, and creating a new image for itself.   When someone sees a new game released by 3D Realms, they can count on it being the latest, cutting edge technology in 3D PC graphics.
     My involvement in 3D Realms is great.   It was I who laid out the entire plan for creating it and its image, etc.   However, since my name is so well connected to 'Apogee,' it makes better sense for George to be the front-man for 3D Realms."

CyberNews: What's the best city you have traveled to?   Why?

Scott Miller: "I love Utah and Denver, simply because when I'm in one of those two cities, I'm on my way to a four or five day ski trip!"   Ed. Note: He is the world's best game marketer, not a geography teacher <grin>

CyberNews: What award that you have won personally or professionally made you proudest? Why?

Scott Miller: "I don't care much about awards, they rarely do anything but feed egos.   If I had my arm twisted, I'd pick a trophy I won in a karate tournament.   I had a red belt at the time (I now have a black belt) and I beat an opponent who had 30 pounds and three inches over me, plus he was a black belt.   I remember never being so scared prior to the bout, but when I entered the ring I took a deep breath and focused on the task at hand.
After the fight, I discovered I broke several of my opponents ribs."   Ed. Note: Sort of makes a Mortal Kombat type game a lock, eh? :-)

Since we are in cyberspace, I had a chance to reflect on my questions.   The following questions were answered by Scott after the first set:

CyberNews: What age would you let your child play Wolf?

Scott Miller: "My three year old son loves to watch me play Wolf, Blake and our coming Rise of the Triad, which will be the goriest game ever released.   I tell him that it's not real, no one is being hurt, and it's just a cartoon.   I think that younger players should avoid overexposure to violent games, and only play while parents are present to explain the game as not being real.
     In Rise of the Triad, we've taken an extra step: This game will have a parental lock-out code, which turns off the gore and blood in the game."

CyberNews: Did you expect Wolf to be the big hit it turned out to be?   Describe the experience . . .

Scott Miller: "Id Software had made two EGA 3D games (Hover Tank and Catacombs 3-D) for Softdisk's monthly game publication, Gamer's Edge. After seeing these two games, I knew that a shareware 3D game would be a tremendous success. However, Id Software wasn't going to make a 3D game for the shareware market originally. I had to work out a special deal with them, in which Apogee made a game for Gamer's Edge, giving time for Id to develop Wolfenstein 3-D.

It also took several weeks to convince them to make it a six episode game, rather than only three episodes. This allowed us to charge $50 for six episodes, which is what most players purchased.

When Wolf was released, it easily surpassed our expectations. I knew the technology was cutting-edge, but really, when you think about it, it's just a maze game. So I wasn't sure if the public would dislike it for being too simplistic. That fear was quickly shot down when orders came in so fast we had to hire more phone operators."

CyberNews: Can you spill any beans on where Apogee is headed outside of the PC games market? Are you, say, moving into video, etc?

Scott Miller: "We don't have any plans other than to make PC action games. Diversification is the opposite of focus, and we plan to remained focused on PC games--and that's all."

Scott Miller, a man who got tired of giving away his software, invents a marketing practice that gives birth to a whole new industry and still has time to play ping pong. What more can you ask of a person?

  Info on 3D Realms' Latest...BLOOD!

What you need to know about what's out there!

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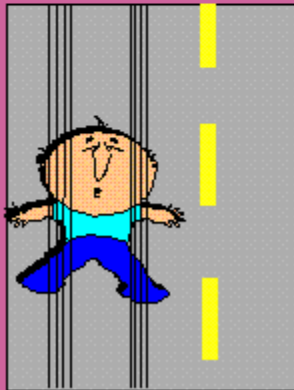How to write for us...
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Business

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[CA Super Project](#)

[ExpenseIt!](#)

[Time Planner Deluxe](#)

These apps are sure to help you make contact in CyberSpace!

[Close Up 6.0](#)

[Delrina Communications Suite](#)

[Reach Out Remote Control](#)

Education

Learning is one thing you never want to stop doing and these apps will make sure you don't!
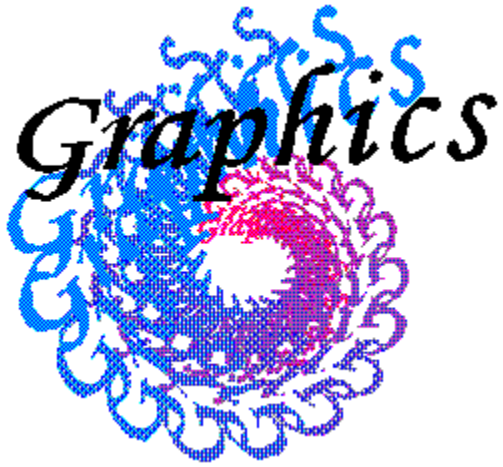
[Bailey's Book House](#)

[Playball!](#)

[Wayzata World Factbook](#)

[Green Explorer](#)

[Kid's Zoo](#)

[Learn to Read in Wordland](#)

Dazzling...simply dazzling!!

[Collage Complete](#)

[Halo Desktop Imager](#)

[Image Pals 2](#)

[trueSpace](#)

[Type Twister](#)

Home

These apps will make your home sweeter than it already is!

[Automap](#)

[The Garden Guide](#)

[The Homebuyer's Guide](#)

[PC Stitch](#)

[The Russell Knitters' Alphabet](#)

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Multimedia & Games

Computers aren't meant for work alone!

[Exploring Ancient Cities](#)

[Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous Cookbook](#)

 [Important Info!](#)

Networking

Connectivity is the name of the game!!

(New topic text goes here.)

Utilities

These apps are going to make your life a whole lot easier...

[CD Essentials](#)

[Check-It Pro](#)

[PC Install](#)

[Sidebar for Windows](#)

[Windows Magic](#)

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3D Realms Previews:
✷ "BLOOD" ✷

"BLOOD": Coming Soon From
3D Realms Entertainment

Coming Soon to a Scream Near You!

3D Realms Shows Off:
☀ "BLOOD" ☀
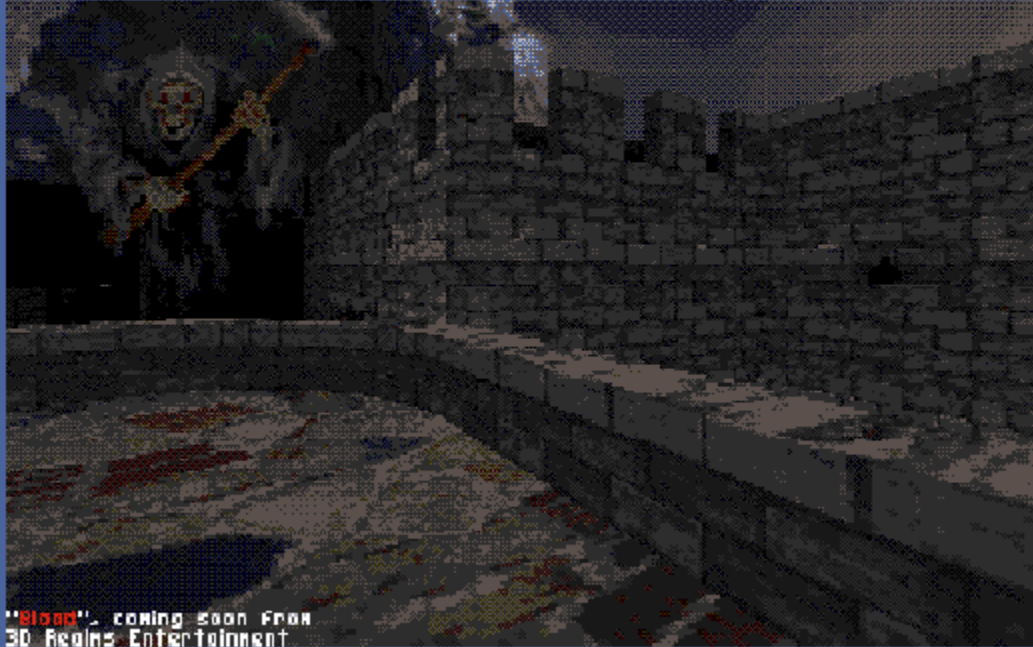
"Blood", coming soon from
3D Realms Entertainment

Time to Harvest New Game Players!

The BBS Cash Machine

As a sysop, you pour hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars each year into your BBS. Don't you deserve to see something in return?
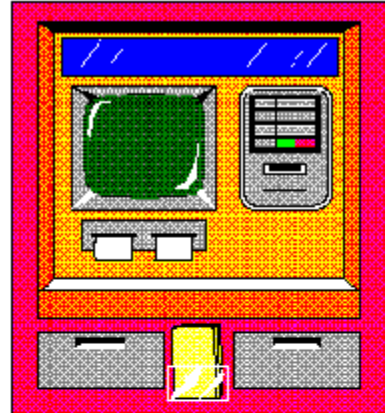
Even if you don't want to make a load of money from your BBS, this book is for you! Written by a sysop with 10 years experience at running a profitable, popular BBS, this book will show you how to attract and keep paying customers on your BBS!

Some facts from the book: the easiest way to hook customers costs less than a soda, the cheapest way to attract new files doesn't involve any long distance and national connectivity is affordable for almost any BBS!

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PC-Stitch
review by
Gail B.C. Marsella

I asked to review PC-Stitch - without knowing a thing about it - because I've been doing needlework for years and would like to start designing my own projects instead of following purchased instructions.

Initially, I was a little disappointed. PC-Stitch bills itself as a "tool that allows you to design and print customized needlecraft patterns," but that's really an exaggeration. It's almost completely limited to counted cross-stitch, not the more elaborate stitches possible in embroidery or needlepoint. It cannot do any of the shaping necessary to produce a garment, so that leaves out knitting and sewing patterns, too. (It might be usable for certain types of rugmaking that use evenly spaced knots, or for intarsia patterns on a knitted fabric, although knitted stitches are rectangular, not square, and the design would distort somewhat.)

As a full-featured design program, it falls short, too (in spite of a reasonably good mirroring function so you can draw symmetrical objects.). Counting squares individually is the only way to measure something, for example, because there's no ruler. There is also no way of copying and pasting irregular shapes, although you can do so with squares and rectangles. Additionally, I wish there had been a clip art library containing outlines of objects common in needlework - flowers, leaves, animals and so on - or at least a way of creating a user-generated library for quick access. The main tools are the computer equivalent of a box of crayons and a sheet of graph paper - usable for design, but not great.

Having said all that, though, I think it's still worth a look. Consider what the program does manage to do. The import function translates graphics files directly to the stitch counting grid, where they can be edited.
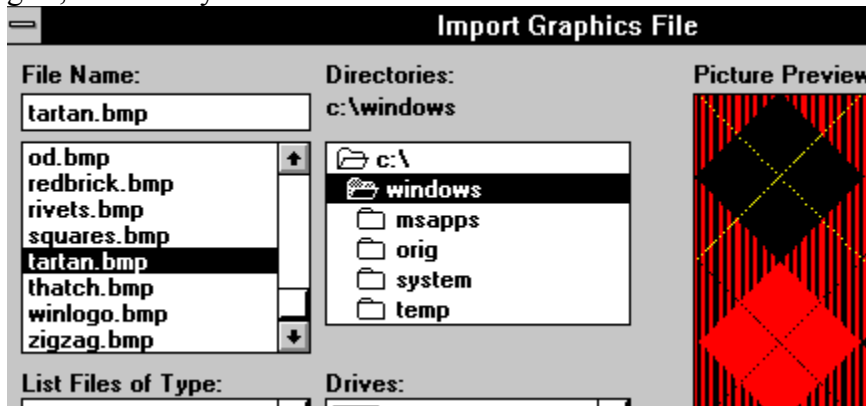
You can paste more than one imported image on the same page, and then rotate or flip portions of the image. (The program's features begin to look a lot better when you consider them editing tools rather than design tools.) The colors of the imported image are automatically matched to embroidery floss color codes, and the codes print right out with the pattern. Additionally, substitute codes are provided so you can mix and match equivalent colors from all three of the big floss manufacturers (DMC, Anchor, and J&P Coats.) Nice. Very nice. No more fiddling around with making up symbols, cross matching them with floss colors, and writing them in little

boxes on a grid.

For taking the drudgery out of translating a design into cross-stitch instructions, this program may be invaluable. That's what it does well.

The requirements for running PC-Stitch are: an IBM compatible computer (at least a 386), with two MB of RAM, a mouse, a printer, and Windows 3.1. The installation instructions are standard: select Run... from the File menu on Program Manager and run setup from the source drive.

The manual's illustrations are too small and low-resolution to be helpful (the whole booklet needs a rigorous proofreading, too), but it is well-organized, small enough to be non-threatening, and will get the user started fairly quickly. A brief tour of all the menu items is followed by a thoroughly worked out example. I am unfamiliar with the stitch terminology used here - whole, half, and quarter stitches - so I will just mention that they are available for placement in the pattern; the quarter stitches can be placed at various corners of individual grid squares.

The program opens to a main screen with a grid on it. You can select the stitch count and grid size for your pattern, and zoom in and out on the grid. (Very complicated patterns take a long time to be drawn on the screen if they are fully in view, so it saves some time to zoom in on a portion of the pattern.) A menu bar runs across the top of the main screen, and a toolbar runs vertically on the left side. The last two buttons on the vertical toolbar are confusing. They're both toggles, but each changes the choices available on the other, and the combination of choices determines what tool you get. Presumably the program designers did this to avoid cluttering up the screen with icons, but I don't like it. Call me a reactionary, but I want tool icons to do one thing, or at most toggle between two. I don't want them interfering with their neighbors on the toolbar. The same choices are available through the menus, however, so I ignored the offending buttons.

To import a picture, you put a placeholder called an Edit Box on the main screen grid, and then open a very well designed Import Graphics File dialog box. It has a preview area for the various graphics files, and access to .BMP, .PCX, .GIF, and .TIF formats. Additionally, you can choose to vary the size of the Edit Box to match the imported picture proportions (to avoid distorting or clipping it).

Printing is a memory intensive process for PC-Stitch, and the larger the grid, the longer it takes. I exceeded the memory in my laser printer for a pattern on a ten inch square canvas, and had to make it smaller. The printout itself is clear and understandable, with a color symbol in each square of the grid, and every tenth line in boldface so you can find your way around more easily. The color codes, symbol key, pattern size in inches, number of stitches per inch, and the pattern file name print out on a separate sheet of paper. The program allegedly supports color printing, although I don't have the equipment to try that out.

In short, here's what you do with this program: first design your images with regular drawing or CAD software, or scan photographs or the kids' drawings, and then use PC Stitch to do the translation, editing, color matching, stitch counting, and printout of the instructions. Viewed as an overall design package, it has severe limitations, but viewed as a design utility it works very well indeed. I plan to keep it and use it for just that.

Automap
review by
Hugh W. (Chip) Cox

   To use the words of my neighbor who is the sales representative for a large corporation handling the southeast corner of the United States, "WOW!"   Automap is a software package that helps plan how to get from here to there in the most efficient way.   On the basis of a starting city, ending city, and any cities or location you want to visit in between, Automap calculates the fastest, shortest, preferred or alternate route which meets your criteria.   If all that seems like a lot from a program, it is.

   Having never seen Automap before, it only took about ten minutes to plan my neighbor's next sales trip once the program was installed.   Automap came up with a way that he had not thought about going before, and it would save him about 30 dollars in gas costs.   Automap not only plans one stop trips, but it also allows you to indicate what cities or locations via which you would like to travel.   There is a limit of 4 locations that can be entered as "VIA" locations for stopovers between one location and another.   If you are planning a trip and want to stop several places, the best way to set it up will probably be as several small trips between the locations of interest.   For example the picture below shows the route Automap came up with for a round trip from Memphis TN, and back via Clinton MS, and Panama City Beach FL.   The gray lines are other routes Automap determined will get me where I want to go.   They are not as good a choice though based on my preferences.
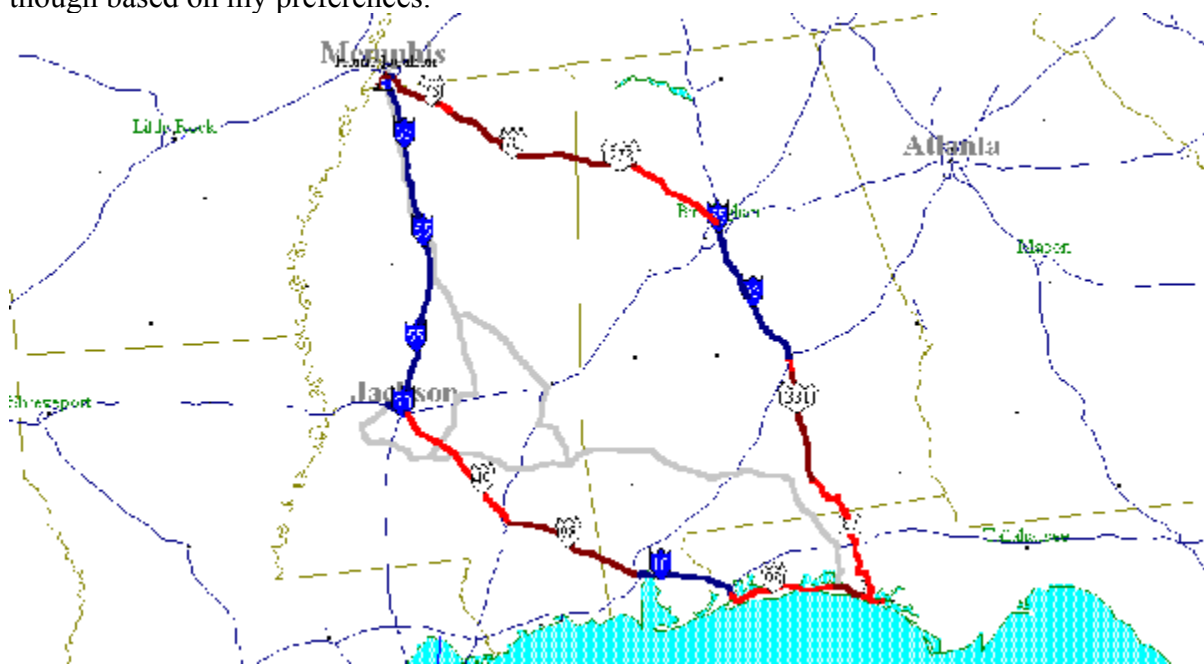
   Sections of highway can also be marked as "avoid" if you don't want to go that way for some reason.   For instance, by telling Automap to avoid highway 78 in Mississippi I get the following map.
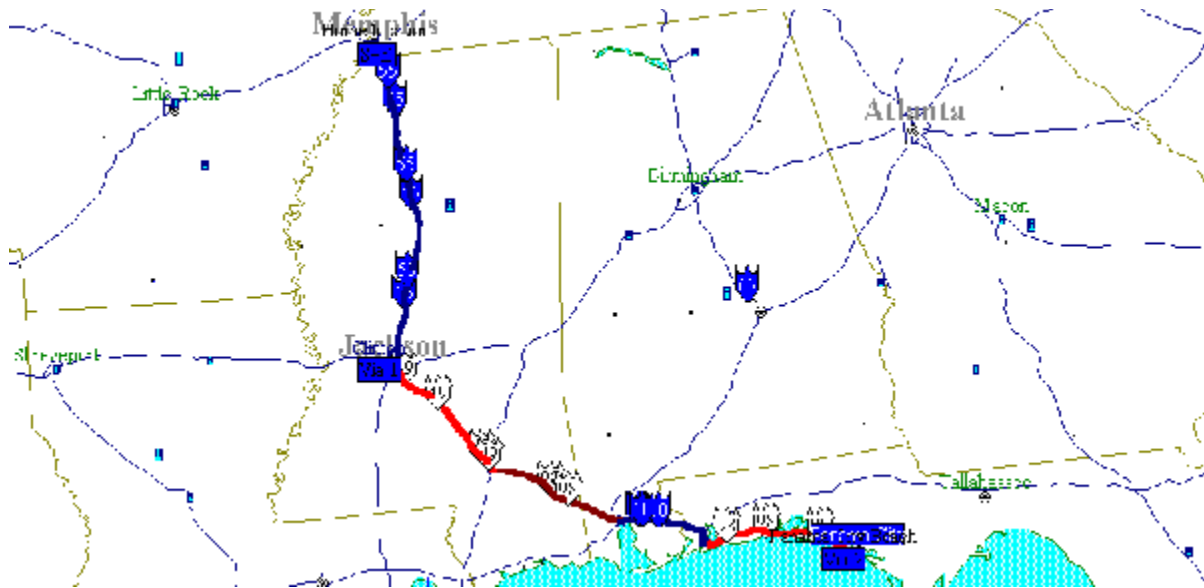
       Installation from a CD-ROM was quick and easy.   The documentation handles both floppy and CD-ROM installation.   The entire installation to a hard drive only takes approximately 5.5 megabytes.   This ensures that it will easily fit on any laptop.   I tested Automap on a 386-33 under Windows 3.1 with a CD-ROM drive, 16 megabytes of Ram and a 500MB hard drive.   I found the response to be fast and crisp even when drawing the entire United States' road system.   The minimum requirements for the CD-ROM version of Automap are Windows 3.1, CD-ROM drive, 4MB Ram, and 2MB hard disk space.   These values assume a partial installation of the software in which the databases remain on the CD-ROM drive.   A full installation requires 4MB ram and 5 1/2MB of free disk space.

       While this version of the software did not provide city street detail it was able to find all of the small towns we were looking for.   Detail maps of several cities can be purchased. Automap has several overlays available to show rivers, lakes, and other geographical formations. Places of interest are also identified.   A nice feature not currently included in Automap would be a tie in with city information.   This information would indicate which hotels, restaurants, gas stations etc. are located in each city.

       Another feature I would like to see is the ability to set dates and times for the directions. For example, the following trip from Memphis and back via Nashville TN would generate the following set of directions.

Time	Dist	Instruction	Road	For	Dir	Towards
12:00 AM	0.0	DEPART Home location (Memphis) on the	Local road	1/2 miles		
12:00 AM	0.4	Take the	I240	1 mile	N	
12:01 AM	1.2	Take the	I240	2 miles	N	
12:03 AM	3.0	Turn off onto	U79	2 miles	E	
12:06 AM	4.9	Go onto	I40	193 miles	E	

2:41AM	197.4	Turn off onto	U70	12 miles	E	(Opryland)
2:52AM	209.3	Turn left onto	U31	1/2 miles	N	Nashville
2:52AM	209.8	ARRIVE Nashville (TN)				
2:52AM	209.8	DEPART Nashville (TN) on the	U31	1/2 miles	N	(Berry Hill)
2:53AM	210.2	Turn right onto	U70	12 miles	S	
3:04AM	222.1	Bear left onto	I40	193 miles	W	Jackson
5:39AM	414.6	Go onto	U79	2 miles	W	
5:42AM	416.5	Turn left onto	I240	2 miles	S	(Memphis Airport)
5:44AM	418.3	Take the	I240	1 mile	S	
5:44AM	419.1	Take the	Local road	1/2 miles		
5:45AM	419.5	ARRIVE Home location (Memphis)				

This appears to assume that I am going to start out at 12:00 AM and not spend any time in Nashville.   Having the ability to modify the times listed to indicate a lunch break, meeting or rest stop would allow this listing to be used as an itinerary for my secretary.

In closing, Automap is well worth the expected street price of $49.95 for anyone who travels extensively or wants to take a vacation in the family car.   I found Automap to be stable, easy and intuitive to use.   By the way, my neighbor made it back alive.

Automap Inc.
1309 114th Ave SE
Bellevue, WA   98004-6999
(206) 455-3552

Estimated Street Price $49.95

The Garden Guide Version 1.0 (1992)
by John George, Jr. and Donna M. George
Ascend Software ($10 to register for the full working program)
review by
J. Barrett

The Garden Guide is an informational database program that contains vital information for the home gardener.   It seems to be fairly general and not for any specific region of the US.

I found this program to be VERY useful.   Although I do not have a garden this year, I have had them in the past.   This program has sections on vegetable, flower and herb gardens.   I thought I might get one or the other, not all three.   What a nice surprise!   There are also sections on how to choose vegetable plants, and the planning stage.   In one chart, it shows what is compatible with another in a garden.   The option of printing the display is only available in the registered version.

I think a good enhancement to this would be for more interaction from the computer user. My idea would be for the end user to be able to actually input what he wants to plant.   Then have the chart drawn giving the vegetable names, placed strategically so they are still harmonious with each other.   The program should then be able to determine if one vegetable should be relocated, prompt the user and ask him where to place it.   The program might also, after all the input, be able to determine where one should plant their vegetables.

One of my jobs is working with our local Town Planner reviewing soil and erosion plans. I am satisfied with the methods this program discusses on how to analyze soil and what kinds of tools one will need in order to plant even a basic garden.   With today's threat of the environment, there is also a section on composting, and the information provided is accurate and well written.

There is also a section on gardening through the winter season.   If this isn't enough, there are some recipes included that you can use; one I will be trying will be the zucchini bread. Then, the icing on the cake - a listing of catalogs is also included.   Just what I need, more sources of information on where to obtain seeds, plants, etc. <G>

This program also has the ability to generate a worksheet to plan your garden on paper. After you've registered the program you will have the capability to print this worksheet.   In my mind this program has it all and then some.   I highly recommend this program!

System Requirements: 128K RAM
                                     MS-DOS 3.0 or greater
                                     One disk drive

Optional: Printer
                 CGA
                 Hard disk drive

The Homebuyer's Guide for Windows Version 1.01
review by
Carl Dolmetsch

The packaging is unpretentious, a very simple (not elaborate) User's Manual, and 2 disks. I decided to give it the ultimate test by installing it, firing it up and trying to use it without knowing anything about it.   I did this for two reasons: First, a common conception these days is that software should be so easy that it doesn't require any reading to be able to use it (the "show me" mentality).   Second, I wanted to see for myself what this software was without being contaminated by any publication hype or hoo-haa.

This software passes the grade on all accounts.   It is immediately easy to use with considerable help inside the program.   The primary purpose of this software is to assist people in making a home buying decision.   There are few things in this world that are more complicated than buying a house (controlling federal spending and reversing global warming come to mind). Granted, we manage to make it a complicated process.   Be that as it may, most of us who have been through the experience at least once have come out of it with our heads spinning.   The Homebuyer's Guide simplifies the process and displays the results in an easy-to-understand format.   It is not surprising that Realtors and Mortgage Bankers are beginning to use this software.   Once initial figures are plugged in,   the reality of the situation quickly becomes apparent to the prospective buyer.

The Homebuyer's Guide divides the process into five major steps, each identified by a large "Radio" button at the top of the screen: Preparation, Home hunting, Financing, Offer, and Closing.
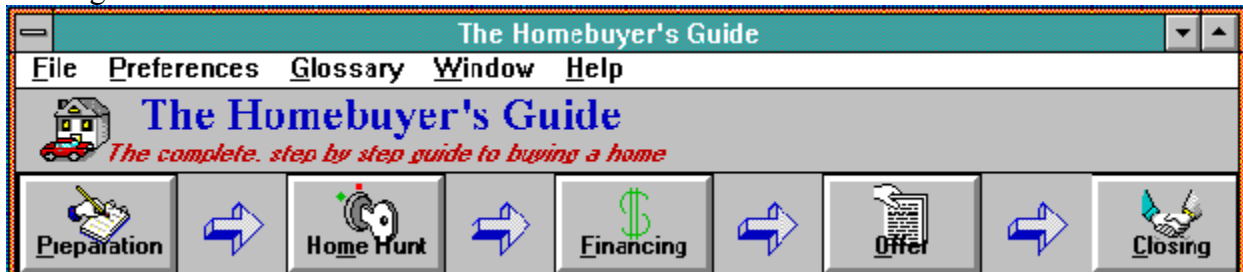
Each "Radio" button represents an available pull-down menu of options.   Options are displayed in blue and red.   Blue options are text which explain the home buying process at that given step. Red options require data input and report out results.   For example, the process begins with an explanation of the buy vs. rent decision.   The user is then guided to a worksheet to plug in real numbers in their own buy vs. rent assessment.   From this, the user is guided through a series of discussions to "prequalification" (always one of my favorite steps).   By this point, the prospective buyer has a pretty good visual representation of the way things stand.

Although rich in detail, The Homebuyer's Guide is easy to use and understand.   The results of it can provide the prospective buyer with that "independent source" of information to validate or invalidate what the real estate agent or mortgage banker is saying.

I wish that I had it available when we were buying our houses and even before   --   when we were first assessing the rent vs. buy decision!   I ran a couple of analyses through the system. The first, I based on a rent decision of twenty years ago.   Had I chosen a buy option, the house would have been paid off by now, and I would be $50,000 ahead!   Using the system to track our

most recent house purchase, I found that we had made a good selection in terms of neighborhood and projected appreciation.

Requirements: 4 MB Ram
                 4 MB hard disk space

Tetra Solutions, Inc.
821 Alameda
Belmont, CA   94002
(415) 802-9896
Suggested retail price: $49.95

Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous Cookbook by Robin Leach (CD)
review by
J. Barrett

Although I am familiar with setting up a CD through windows, Compton's sure makes it easy.   When first installed the menus to choose from are: contents, topics, search for (keyword or topics), history of some of the famous people who've submitted recipes, recipes, movies, tips and credits (enough of a variety for all to choose from).

Under contents are the selections of: extravaganza affairs, casual entertaining, relaxing at home, weight and measurement charts, and herbs.   At any time, you can search for a special topic that interests you.   The movies include some very well known people.   For example, one is about Jerry Lewis, while another is about Liz Taylor.   With the precise words only Robin Leach can select, the movies are exciting to watch.   There are also interviews with other celebrities. The tips section tells all about what herbs compliment what foods.   The credits list everybody involved in the production of this CD including the restaurants the chefs work at, the stars, the editors, etc.

I selected cookies and came up with some really good ideas - a bit too much to put in my kids lunch bags though <G>.   I then selected zucchini bread as I was just given a bunch from a neighbor's garden and it's already grated.   The bread recipe was just like the one I use, except I don't use salt and I used brown sugar instead of white sugar. There are not many old fashioned recipes, but then again not all of these are the extravagant type.

This cookbook features over 200 recipes and over 350 photographs.   As on most multimedia CD's there are audio and full-motion video that brings the stars, their homes and their food to life on your computer.

The printing capability for all text and pictures was great.   It printed the recipe after I had copied it to the clipboard and put it in a font which I could read.   That's very important to me, as I am visually impaired.

Below is an easy brownie recipe that I found through my search:
-=-
4 1-oz squares unsweetened chocolate, coarsely chopped
2 TB (1/4 stick) unsalted butter
4 eggs
2 tsp vanilla
2 c sugar
1 c flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 c chopped walnuts
1 12-oz pkg. mini semisweet chocolate chips
confectioner's sugar (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.   Butter a 9" x 13" baking pan.   Combine the unsweetened chocolate and the butter in the top of a double boiler.

Stir over hot but not boiling water till melted and smooth.   Remove from heat and set aside.

In the bowl of a food processor, process the eggs, vanilla, sugar, flour, baking powder and salt till smooth.   Add the melted chocolate and process till smooth.   Add the walnuts and chocolate chips and pulse briefly to mix.   Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Invert onto a rack and cool completely   Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar if desired.   Cut into squares and serve with vanilla ice cream.

Makes about 30 2" brownies.

-=-

Along with the demo version of this are a few special offers from Compton's.   One is a free oven mitt (while supplies last).

I would highly recommend this CD for special occasions but I will not be tossing out my hardcopy cookbooks.   This seems to be lacking the essential basic recipes, but then again, the rich and famous only cook elegant enticing meals <G>.

RKA -- The Russell Knitters' Alphabet Version 1.20 (1988)
review by
J. Barrett

I decided on this shareware program for a lot of reasons.   I felt one can use it for a multitude of crafts.   From the designing stages of a cross stitch sampler to knitting, this program can be utilized.

What it specifically does is take a word or phrase up to approximately 72 characters (the exact length of the phrase depends on the width of individual characters) and converts it into a chart for knitting that word or phrase.   It also calculates the total number of stitches used by a phrase to assist the designer in fitting the phrase into the space allowed.   As a seasoned knitter, crocheter, and cross stitch crafter, I can use this program with any of those crafts with some slight changes.   I feel anyone who is into crafts can see exactly what it is they really want for a design after using this program.

The program should run on any reasonably standard IBM PC or equivalent clone. The program works satisfactorily in character mode, so any 80- column monochrome or color configuration should be adequate, but it works a bit better on CGA systems.

The program makes only the most basic assumptions about the printer: that it can print ordinary characters and that it can overprint a line before advancing to the next line. Most printers will produce print at 6 lines per inch if nothing is done to alter their power-up state. However, you may prefer the output of this program with closer-spaced lines, e.g., 8 or 9 to the inch. If you have some way of setting up your printer for such close spacing, then use it before running RKA.

If you have an Epson printer, then you can use the small file 9LINE.PRN   (included with the program) to set up your printer for nine lines per inch. Just issue the command COPY 9LINE.PRN PRN to send the appropriate codes to your printer. To reset the printer to its usual 6 lines per inch, turn the printer off and on again.

Running on a CGA-compatible system, you will see the following.   If you ask for Low resolution, then you will see the phrase spelled out in X's. (You may want to adjust the vertical size on your monitor to make the phrase more readable.)

70 stitches total -- make a hard copy?
If you press "N", the program will exit to the DOS prompt.
Enter RKA again to enter another phrase.

If you want a printed copy of the phrase, make sure your printer is ready and press "Y". Press Esc to stop the printing. The printer will print out the graph. See the instructions below for adjusting the line spacing on an Epson printer. For other printers, see your printer documentation.

The message I printed out said "Cybernews-you read it here first."

This is the display one can use to work right into their craft (either knitting or counted cross stitch).

CYBERSNEWS-YOU READ IT HERE FIRST
133 stitches

```
        10    20    30    40    50    60
        |     |     |     |     |     |
.XXX.X...X.XXX..XXX.XXXX.X..X.XXX.X...X.XXX......X...X..XX..X..X..
X....XX.XX.X..X.X...X..X.XX.X.X...X.X.X.X.......XX.XX.X..X.X..X..
X.....XXX..XXX..XXX.XXX..XXXX.XXX.X.X.X.XXX.XXX..XXX..X..X.X..X..
X......X...X..X.X...X.XX.X.XX.X...X.X.X...X.......X...X..X.X..X..
.XXX...X...XXX..XXX.X..X.X..X.XXX..X.X..XXX.......X....XX...XX...
        |     |     |     |     |     |
        10    20    30    40    50    60
        |     |     |     |     |     |
XXXX.XXX..X..XXX...X.XXXXX..X.X.XXX.XXXX.XXX..XXX.X.XXXX.XXX.XXXXX..
X..X.X...X.X.X..X.X..X...X....X.X.X...X.X.X....X...X.X..X.X.X.....X....
XXX..XXX.XXX.X..X.X...X....XXX.XXX.XXX..XXX..XX..X.XXX..XXX...X....
X.XX.X...X.X.X..X.X...X....X.X.X...X.XX.X....X...X.X.X.XX...X...X....
X..X.XXX.X.X.XXX...X...X....X.X.XXX.X..X.X.XXX..X...X.X..X..X.XXX...X....
        |     |     |     |     |     |
        10    20    30    40    50    60
```

What I would do with this display or hard copy is incorporate it into my cross stitch pattern by marking off row by row when I've completed a row of X's.   Another easy way to do that is to use a paper clip on the side of the paper or a ruler - if it can stay stable enough. Although you can also do the same with graph paper, this is a quick and unique way the computer can do it for you!

Exploring Ancient Cities
review by
Rob Wood

If you're one of those people who thinks history is a subject best left to archaeologists and college professors, check out this CD from SUMERIA.   The SF-based multimedia publisher has joined forces with *Scientific American* magazine to create an interactive aural and visual feast for the mind.

With easy to access maps, slides, text and QuickTime movies, the CD leads you on a journey of exploration of four ancient cities (Crete, Petra, Pompeii and Teotihuacan) which shared a historical parallel development from 700 BC to 750 AD   The program is completely interactive and is "interest specific"   in that it allows the user to access detailed information about particular aspects of these cultures, from art to architecture, via the media of active slide show, movie, map or sidebar buttons which correspond to underlined "hot text"   in the main body.   This flexibility should make the CD appealing to those with a professional interest in the subjects as well as to those who only wish to be entertained.   As an alternative to reading the text, the user can opt for a full-screen slide show, complete with audio narration by Academy Award winner Rob McKuen.

The graphical interface, while a bit slow in transitions, is excellent; with near-video quality Quick Time movies and color-saturated photos (accessed via the included Apple software).   When double-clicking the CD icon in the Windows Program Manager, I found that all of the colors on the screen turned black before the "Ancient Cities" opening screen came up. A call to customer support alleviated my concern, as it was explained to me that the program draws all available colors from the palette for color saturation.   The CD includes interactive maps, which allow the user to zoom from a world relief map to a regional map to a close-up street map of the ruins.   Clicking on the "Labels" icon on the street map provides text for each structure symbolized on the map, and clicking on indicated structure symbols causes a corresponding full-screen, captioned slide to appear on the screen.   An interactive timeline is also provided, which allows the user to trace historical parallel developments in the period.

In addition to the historical context provided for each city, current information is offered in the form of text, slides and interviews about visitor access to the sites, restoration and preservation efforts.   Finally, the user is given the option of copying text, slides, music and movies to other programs for non-commercial use.

Whether you're a serious scholar or merely curious about ancient civilizations, Exploring Ancient Cities is well worth the suggested retail price of $59.95.

Minimum Requirements: IBM-compatible: 486/33 or better CPU
8MB of RAM
DOS 5.0 or greater
Windows 3.1
VGA + display (256 colors at 640 x 480 resolution)
sound card
Double-speed CD-ROM recommended.

SUMERIA

329 Bryant Street, Suite 3D
San Francisco, California 94107
(415) 904-0800   Fax (415) 904-0888

Bailey's Book House
review by
Jacci Howard Bear

       Bailey's Book House is an educational program that develops early reading skills. Combining sound, words, and pictures, children hear the words and letters spoken, see them written on the screen, and watch the colorful characters act out the meanings of the words. While children see it as fun and games, parents may be the ones having the most fun.   Hearing my oldest daughter earnestly instruct each animal character to "take a shower" or watching the youngest search for the source of the "little voices" is delightful.

       Aside from their enjoyment of the game, it is also a learning tool that teaches while it entertains.   Each of the five main sections contains a variety of ways to learn letters, simple word meanings, and sound-symbol relationships.   Intended for ages 2 to 6, Bailey's Book House holds the attention of children at each age and provides enough variety to keep them interested in learning.   My own children are 2, 3, and 7 so I was able to get a range of "opinions" about Bailey and his friends in the Book House.   By the way, Bailey is a big gray cat wearing glasses and a crooked baseball cap.   His friends are a menagerie of animals and insects from A to Z (literally).
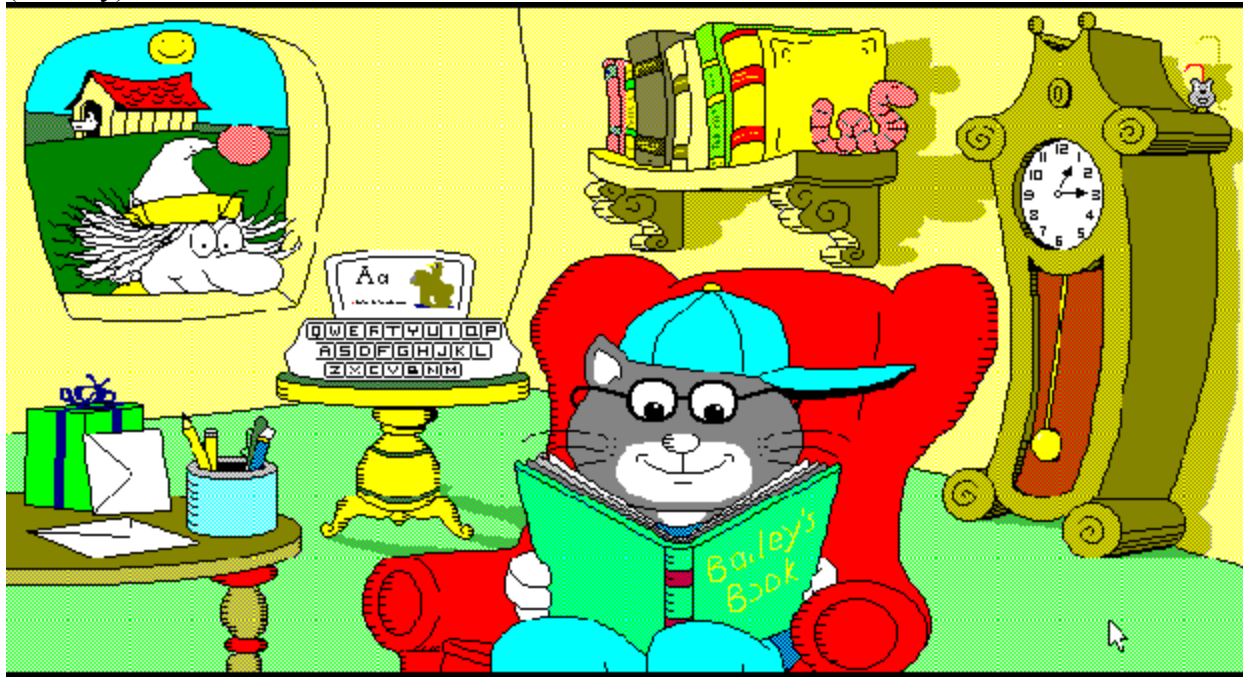
       The Letter Machine uses an on-screen keyboard and computer screen to teach the alphabet.   Pressing or clicking on a letter gives you roller-skating rhinos or pizza-eating eagles and other animals in unlikely poses.   For the older child this section can teach early typing skillsby learning the position of letters on the standard QWERTY keyboard.

       When I learned Mother Goose rhymes, the mouse always ran up the clock, but in Read-a-Rhyme you may find him running up a block, a rock or even a sock.   In addition to putting new words to favorite rhymes, children learn how to identify rhyming words.

       Edmo & Houdini (one's a dog, the other a clown, don't ask me which is which)

demonstrate simple prepositions as children send them in, over, or under the doghouse.

With my son's penchant for drawing and sending letters to grandma, Kid Cards may be his favorite part of the Book House. A child can design cards or posters with words and pictures for any occasion to print and color.

In Make-a-Story, the child chooses the character, the mode of travel, the location, and the activity. Each story is uniquely theirs. You can also print and fold stories into storybooks.

With just a few minutes of instruction, my three-year old was able to move through the program easily. Her favorite section is the storytelling. For now she delights in putting Harley the Horse or Dorothy the Duck into the bathtub and sending them to the island where they can play a piano or fly a kite. As her interests change so will the stories she creates. Her personal assessment of the game? "I want to do that story." No doubt the other sections will become favorites in time.

My 7 year old son already reads fairly well but even he is learning with Bailey. The Mother Goose Read-A-Rhyme helps him better understand rhyming words. For my two-year old twins, Bailey's is a delight no matter what section we use. They especially delight in the movement of the characters as they play a fiddle, roller-skate, or pop out of the shrubbery.

For parents, there is an on-screen guide to the skills each section teaches. It also suggests activities for parent and child to do together to reinforce the skills taught by Bailey and friends.

On the technical side, I did have a few difficulties getting Bailey's up and running. For one thing, the program requires almost 10 megs of disk space. It is not a small program. If you install to a compressed drive (such as one compressed with DoubleSpace or Stacker) be aware that you need double the required disk space in order to install the programthat is, you should have 20 megs free before attempting to install. The program will only take up about 10 megs but needs to see 20 in order to install properly. Evidently this is a common problem because my call to technical support only took about half a minute after I described my problems.

The program also uses a huge amount of conventional memory (at least 530K). I have to unload several TSRs before running Bailey's Book House. They do not recommend running Bailey's from within Windows. I was unable to get it to start up at all without completely exiting Windows.

A sound device is required. I manage to run it using only my PC speaker but the sound is not high quality. I can still hear and understand the speech but it is halting and scratchy sounding. Unless you have a very high-quality PC speaker I don't recommend using it without the sound device as the spoken words are an integral part of the learning process.

There are a few configuration options which allow you to adjust the game for different ages including how the mouse moves and how the keyboard in the Letter Machine is configured. If you have a 2 or 3 year old, this program is a perfect introduction to reading that will grow with them. If like me, you have several children under 6, Bailey's is one program that can meet the needs of all of them.

Minimum Configuration: MS-DOS 3.1 or later
                                  VGA or EGA
                                  Hard Disk
                                  640K memory
                                  10 Mhz 80286 or better

Supports Sound Blaster® family, AdLib® compatibles

Optional: Printer (works with most popular printers)
                 TouchWindow

Macintosh Configuration: Macintosh Plus or later
                            Hard Disk
                            System 6.0.7 or higher
                            Memory: For System 6, 1 MB for B&W; 4 MB for color

Edmark Corporation
PO Box 3218
Redmond, WA 98073-3218
(206) 556-8484
Suggested Retail: $49.95

PLAYBALL!
review by
Louis Turbeville

If you, or a youngster you know needs to learn more about America's Favorite Pastime, this is a program to look at.   In typical MicroBase fashion this program is easy to use and full of useful information.   For those of you with doubts about the depth of knowledge a computer programmer has concerning baseball, have no fear.   MicroBase used Alan Bannister as their expert technical advisor.   With his extensive professional career as a player and a coach, rest assured the information is accurate and designed for practical use.

When I originally got this program, I used it from the viewpoint of a player and fan who wanted to learn more about the game.   I learned many new intricacies of the game that I had never thought of before.   This program gives you a lot of insight into what players, coaches and umpires must contend with to be prepared for a game.

However, to my surprise, and pleasure, much of the information presented can also be very useful to the beginning coach, and may possibly be of use to the experienced coach as well.   I volunteered as a coach this past season at the local Youth Center and this program is a beginning coach's delight.   It was a reference tool I turned to many times during our season.   I think it made me a better coach and a bit more understanding of all aspects of the game.

PlayBall! has information on each position on the field and what skills that player needs and what drills best prepare a player for that position.   There is also offensive and defensive information on all of the different plays that are normally called, from how to play a fly ball to what to do when defending a bunt.   Much of the information is easy to read and understand.   This program does not have any audio or video to further explain game situations, but that is the only shortcoming I can find with this excellent, user friendly program.

I'm sure I could have found as much useful information in a book, but it gives me one more reason to justify the computer with my wife and includes a very fun game. The Baseball Trivia game is designed to test your knowledge of baseball trivia and rules. The baseball trivia game will keep youngsters and "youngsters at heart" entertained and

challenged for many hours, while subtly increasing their knowledge and understanding of the game.   This game is designed for one or two players, so you can challenge your buddy to a game of wits.   Choosing the question difficulty determines whether it is a single, double, triple or a   homer.   If the question is answered correctly, you get a hit; answer it wrong and you are out.

      If you desire to learn more about baseball or want to give your little leaguer a slight advantage and confidence in knowing more about the game, then this program is worth a serious look.

<div align="center">

MicroBase Publishing, Inc.
923 South McClintock Dr.
Suite #402
Tempe, Arizona   85282
(602)897-7800
List Price: $59.95

</div>

Wayzata World Factbook
1993 edition - CD-ROM
review by
Louis Turbeville

Here is a program that offers a mountain of information that can be very useful to a traveler or a student doing a paper on a particular country or world region.   The Factbook contains maps, pictures and a lot of textual information on every country.
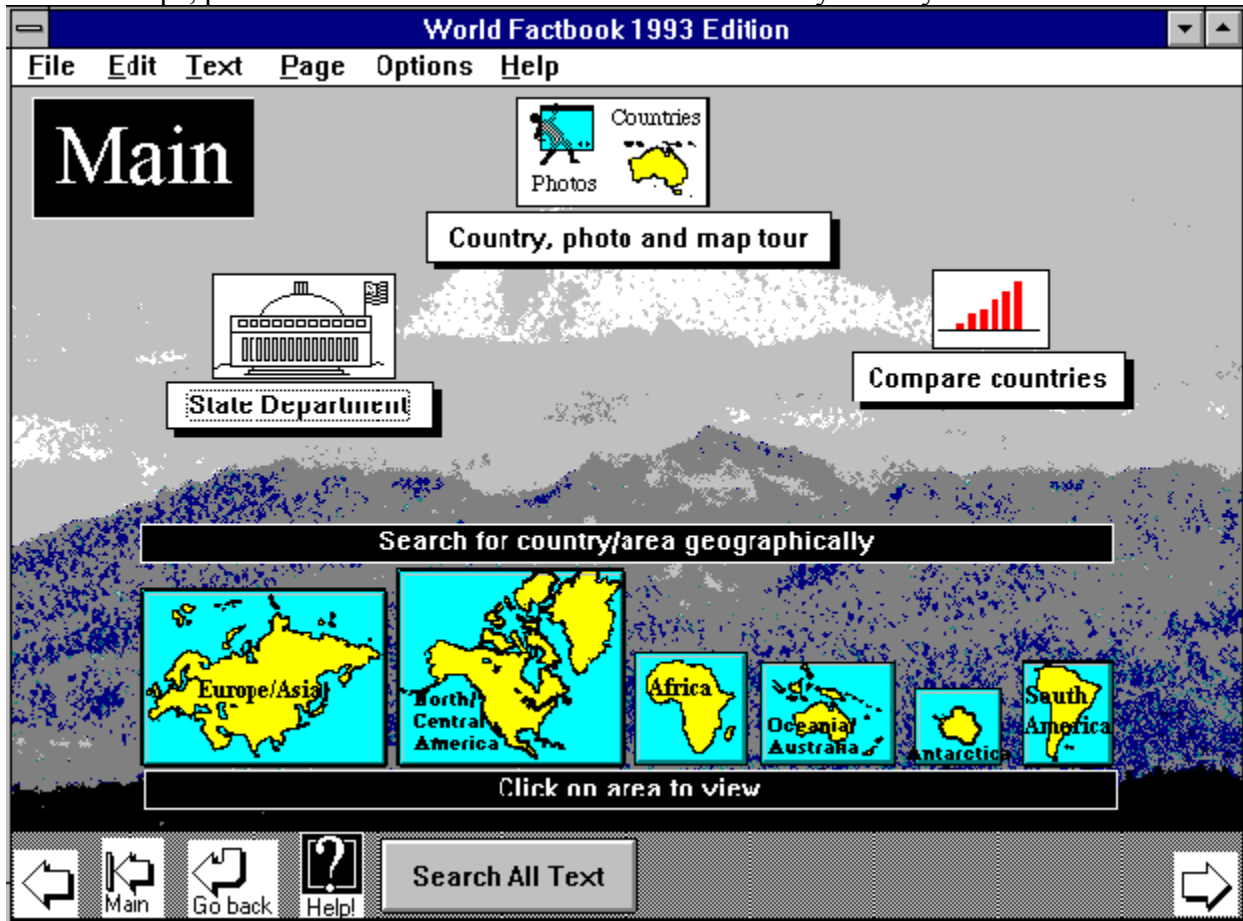
Much of the data in this program was collected by either the State Department or the Central Intelligence Agency and put together in a very concise and easy to find manner.   There is statistical data for every country in the World, with traveler advisories concerning terrorist activity and civil violence.   For students who need research information on a certain country or terrorist group, this is the one place to find it.

While the information contained in the Factbook is very detailed, the Windows interface program needs to be improved.   While testing this program, I stumbled across a couple of shortcomings that can be annoying if you are not prepared for them.   In the Photo Gallery Tour there are several photos that do not display when you choose the photo heading.   You get a message saying "Number does not exist."   This means the program is trying to display a photo

using the wrong filename.   There was also a time when I tried to read a text file on country comparisons and I got a Windows dialog box saying the file was read-only.   This message by itself is not bad, however when you click the OK button, you do not exit the dialog box. Windows will not allow you to exit to DOS if a dialog box is open, so you must reboot the system or turn it off with Windows still running, which is not recommended.   When working with this program, be sure to save the data in other open sessions just to be safe.

There are a couple of nice touches with this program that you don't often see in CD-ROM software.   First, it requires NO hard disk space.   It keeps all of its data on the CD-ROM, where it belongs.   It also includes a DOS based interface, which will display all the text and photos. The DOS interface is not as easy to use as the Windows interface, but it offers a little more stability than its Windows counterpart..

As the program's cover jacket specifies, this program contains "mountains of information," and it could be very useful to a student or world traveler.   If Wayzata World Factbook sounds appealing, you should see about getting the 1994 version when it is available, the minor bugs in this version should be fixed by then.

Wayzata Technology, Inc.
P.O. Box 807
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
(800) 377-7321
Retail Price: $39.00

Green Explorer
review by
Louis Turbeville

If there is something you wanted to know about recycling, but were afraid to ask, then this is a program you definitely want to check out.   This program will teach you most of what you will need to know about recycling and what you can do to help preserve our environment.
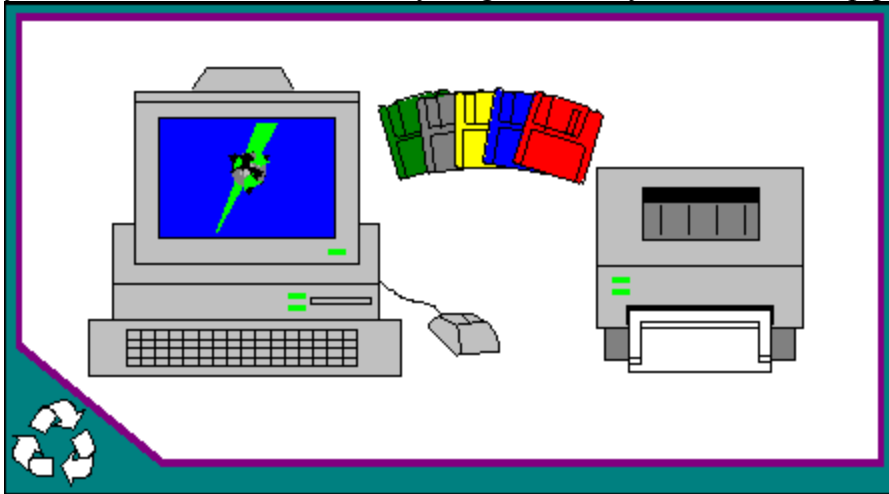
There is no fancy video or stunning audio, but this program is loaded with useful information that can be found and read in a easy manner.   The information is concise, yet accurate and informative.

There are two sections of this program in which everyone will find some useful information.   The first area is the house tour.   In this section, you are given a display of a house with which you can travel from room to room.   In each room there is some information on how you can make that room a little more environmentally sound.   Every room in the house is covered, from the kitchen to the bathroom to the home office.   You will learn what components of your house are not very "green" and what you can do to improve the situation.

The second area of interest is called the Projects section.   In this section there are numerous projects that will educate you while making the environment safer.   All of these projects can be done around the home, and a couple of these projects would be a great group or classroom project.   There is a project here for everyone above the age of six.   The projects in this section are just a few of the many great ideas for environmental protection that you will find throughout the program.

The other areas of the program include:

- a Multiple Choice Quiz Section, with which to test your "green" knowledge.

- a History Overview Section, to give you some background information on why recycling is important and some of the major developments concerning recycling and the green way of thinking.

- an Address Base Section that provides contact information on various companies and groups that are involved in the recycling movement, from companies that used recycled products in the manufacturing stages to publications that cover environmental issues.

- an Index to quickly find vital information you may need.

If you are interested in learning about recycling and ways you can make a difference, then this program is a must see.   MicroBase has a reputation for making its products easy to use and loaded with information.   This program will not disappoint you.

MicroBase Publishing, Inc.
923 South McClintock Dr.
Suite #402
Tempe, Arizona   85282
(602)897-7800/(800)897-3637
List Price: $59.95

Kid's Zoo
review by
Louis Turbeville

This is a program that every kid is sure to love.   Kid's Zoo is designed to entertain and educate children about wildlife.   How this differs from most other animal education programs is that it does not cover facts about adult animals, but rather their offspring.   Most children will be thrilled to learn about "kid" animals because they can relate to them.   It also helps that the voices that narrate you through the many options are kid voices.
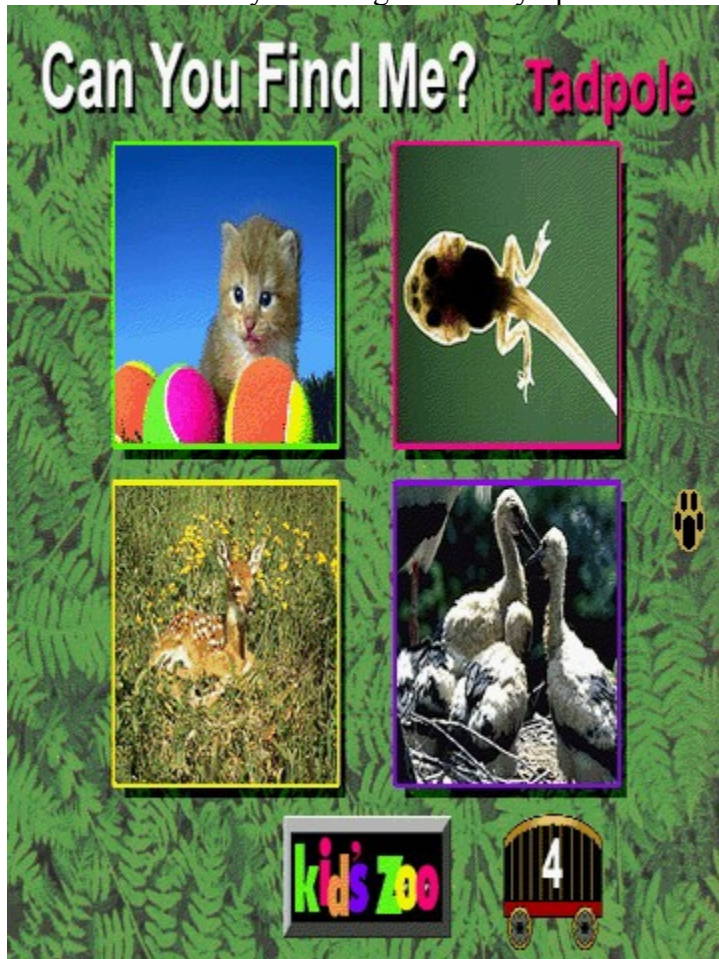
The first thing that will grab your child's attention are the film clips of baby animals. Once they have seen all of the video clips and are ready to explore the rest of the program, they will be educated for hours.   By going to the different sections of the program, your child will learn the names of different wildlife offspring, what sounds they make and what they do.   A nice touch for displaying text is through the use of "thought windows."   This seems much more appealing to youngsters than the use of a dialog box at the bottom of the screen.

Here are a couple of words of caution if you intend to purchase this program.   This program can eat up a lot of hard disk space, regardless of whether you get the CD-ROM or the diskette version.   When I installed the CD-ROM version, I chose the minimum installation

option and it still took up 1.6 MB of space; full installation is around 8MB.   The installation program will also let you setup the program in Windows.   However, since this program is designed to run in DOS you may get warning messages about not enough conventional memory available to play all of the audio.   I got this warning message each time I loaded the program through Windows, but I could still get most of the sound effects correctly.   However, the safest bet would be to just run it from DOS and skip the Windows setup step during installation.

Kid's Zoo is my three year old son's favorite computer program.   Before we got this program, my son loved San Diego Zoo's Animals program but now he hardly asks to use it.   If my son's enchantment is an indication, then your kids will be sure to love this program as well. Its a real winner.

<div align="center">

Knowledge Adventure, Inc.

4502 Dyer Street
La Crescenta, CA 91214
(800)542-4240
List Price: $34.95

</div>

Learn to Read in Wordland
review by
Wayne Macleod

Learn to Read in Wordland is designed for children aged 4 to 8 and includes activities geared towards increasing your child's vocabulary and word recognition skills while having fun. It offers digitized speech through your SoundBlaster compatible sound card or PC speaker.

Installation is simple and painless.   A neat feature of the   process is that it installs a menu system on your HD that can be used to start Wordland or several other children's programs available from the same company.   The menu also offers an option to uninstall the software. The menu is a convenient and safe way for children to start the program on their own, but is not required and can be deleted.   The program is a DOS program, but comes with an included PIF file and icon for use under MS Windows.   Wordland runs equally well from DOS or Windows. If you do not have a SoundBlaster compatible sound card, you will need to run Windows in Standard mode in order to hear the digitized speech of the program through your PC speaker. The installation occupies just under 1 MB of disk space.

Loading Wordland takes you to the opening screen with instructions on how to get help or start the program.   Once past the opening, you are presented with three choices, the "Exploration" activity, the games area, or a detailed help system with an excellent explanation of

using both your mouse and the keyboard to navigate the activities.   Navigation via mouse is simplest, but it is possible to use only the keyboard.   A joystick is not supported.

The "Exploration" activity consists of a typical barnyard scene with animals, equipment and buildings you would expect to encounter on a farm.   Moving the cursor to one of the included pictures and clicking will result in a visual display of the object's name, an appropriate sound and an animated sequence.   The cow moos and shakes its head, a tractor roars and has smoke come out of its stack.   The sequences are very well done.   This area also includes the option to view the same scene in a winter setting, with different animals and equipment more appropriate to the season.   All screens also have a button that offers very nice on-line help with an explanation of the purpose of the activity as well as how to complete it.   Within this activity is a secondary activity. Clicking on the door to the house takes you inside the house where you can explore and identify many household furnishings .   There are several rooms that can be visited by using the doors in the picture to move about.   Again, a change to the Winter changes those items found in the house to things more appropriate to the season, for example, ice cream becomes hot soup and so forth.   The purpose of this area is to give the child a chance to associate the correct written word for many familiar and some new objects that they will encounter in the games section.   It does this very well.

The games section consists of four games, Word lottery, Paint a Word, Words in Space and Candy Factory.   Each of these sections has from two to six levels of difficulty you can select depending upon your child's age and capabilities.

Word Lottery presents the child with three pictures   and rotating words he must move to the correct picture.   Completing each section provides a reward of a short animated sequence. At the top level, the picture disappears after a short time and tests the child's ability to not only match the word to the picture, but to remember which picture was in what position.

Paint a Word brings up a scene such as a typical kitchen with varying numbers of items blacked out.   The object is to move the correct word to the matching blacked out picture with success yielding the picture being filled in, the name "spoken," and an animation of the object.

Words in Space provides a picture of a single object and four words to choose from.   A correct selection earns a gold ball, and an incorrect selection loses one.   The child must earn 22 gold balls to win the game and be rewarded with another cute animation.   This presents one of the few negatives I found with this game.   The number of correct selections, 22, required to finish a round is too high to maintain many children's' enthusiasm.   At higher levels this game becomes more difficult in that the word choices move around the screen if you wait too long to select them.

Candy Factory offers a picture and three possible words, but in this game the words are numbered and the child must press the correct number on the keyboard to answer.   Each correct answer is rewarded with a piece of candy on a conveyor belt.   Ten correct answers causes the belt to start operation and fills a box with the candy that is then wrapped by an animated figure. In the upper levels of this game, the program will answer before the child if they are not quick enough.

Overall, I found this to be an excellent program for the specified age range.   It is fun and it is educational.   The graphics are acceptable and the digitized speech is good even through the PC speaker.   The animation sequences are top rate and enjoyable.   But, the major test of any children's program is...what does a child think of it?   To this end, I turned loose, my 5 year old Wyatt, to put it through "the drill."   He is capable of using a mouse and had little difficulty maneuvering about the different sections of the program.   I found that a short explanation of

how to play each section was all that was required, a tribute to the programs simplicity and well-planned layout.   He played for a couple of hours before getting bored and was back at it less than an hour later.   It is unusual for a game to hold his attention this long or lure him back so quickly.   As a parent I highly recommend this game, and as a child, Wyatt states, "I like this the best!"

Requirements: DOS 2.0 or higher
            VGA or MCGA
            640K RAM
            SoundBlaster compatible sound card recommended.

MSRP $29.95

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Optimum Resource, Inc.

5 Hitech Lane
Hilton Head, SC 29926
(800) 327-1473

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CloseUp 6.0
review by
Don Pellegrino

"Close Up" is a remote communications package for connecting to, and totally controlling, another PC by way of modem.   It is not a normal terminal program in the style of QModem, ProComm, Telix, or CrossTalk which only lets you access the menus of a BBS, CompuServe, or Delphi system.   "Close Up", rather, will connect only to another system that is also running "Close Up" and let you access that system as if you were sitting in front of it.

"Close Up" consists of two main types of applications called the "host" and the "remote." The host system is the one that is being controlled, the remote is the one controlling it.

Installation: Excellent   Time Required: 4 minutes

If only all programs could install with such simplicity, incompatibility would be a thing of the past.   The only slightly technical question is one which asks for the brand of modem you are using.   All other aspects of the installation are covered by a very advanced auto detect program.   There was only one disk and the program sits on just 1.5 MB of hard drive space.

Documentation/Customer Support: Above Average

The User's Guide is easy to read and has a very large index which makes it not only a good tutorial but also a useful reference.   During my call to Norton-Lambert's technical support line, I spent only 1 minute on hold and my questions were answered quickly and accurately. Norton-Lambert also offers support via CompuServe at "GO CLOSEUP."   A BBS service is not offered although you are given a free introductory membership to CompuServe.   The only downfall to this is that the Trouble Shooting section of the User's Guide is very brief.

Terminal Program: Mediocre

The terminal program left a lot to be desired.   It has only text and XModem file transfer ability and doesn't even contain ANSI support.   It would be more efficient for the user to use any other terminal program out there.

Host and Remote Programs: Average

The host and remote systems are very plain.   They are easy to understand and straightforward.   All graphics are converted to 16 color by the host program, a strategy which lowers quality for the sake of speed.   At 14400 baud, DOS text and standard Windows came through swiftly with the 16 color graphics at a reasonable rate.

File Manager: Average

Again, it seems that distinctive features were abandoned, replaced by straightforwardness and ease of use.   I attained an average cps of about 1500 at 14400 baud, which is only 100 cps below that of a normal communication.

Reliability: Below Average

There were some problems with my Windows video driver when running host, and a few of my TSR programs also had a conflict.   It took me a while to get my voice to data capability working, and the remote half of some of my connections offered some complex problems.   The preset configuration for my Viva 14.4/i didn't work correctly.

Synopsis: A simple, little remote control program.

"Close Up" is a bit buggy, but once you get it started you will be able to access the host

just as you would expect.   The drop down menus are very easy to understand and you won't have any trouble learning the functions.   You may be able to get a more advanced remote control program, but nothing is as simple as "Close Up."

System Requirements: IBM and 100% compatibles
                              MS or PC DOS 3.3 or later
                              Windows 3.1 or greater (Optional)
                              Modem
                              SVGA & VGA in Windows
                              VGA, EGA, & CGA in DOS
                              Memory: Host 0K (with UMBs) or 42K min, Remote 375K min.
                              Hard Disk: Recommended

Norton-Lambert Corporation
Post Office Box 4085
Santa Barbara, CA. 93140 U.S.A.
Phone: (805) 964-6767
Fax: (805) 683-5679

Suggested List Price: $199.00

Delrina Communications Suite
review by
Jacci Howard Bear

Delrina Communications Suite packs two powerful punches.   It combines WinFax PRO 4.0, the newest version of Delrina's popular fax software, with a powerful but extremely friendly communications package, WinComm PRO.   Both programs have enough layers and features to satisfy a wide range of needs, yet each is easy to use right out of the box.

When you first install Delrina Communications Suite you may well feel like a kid in a candy store.   Upon initial installation I found myself slightly overwhelmed by all the "sweets" of the two programs combined.   Each installs easily, and I was faxing and modeming almost immediately.   However, so intriguing are the multitude of buttons, icons, and personalization features, that it is easy to become confused.   After the initial "new toy fever" subsides, each program is easier to explore.

Like many people I usually forego the manuals in favor of self-exploration.   Yet to get the full benefit of the programs I highly recommend checking out the manuals, especially the WinFax tutorial.   It is easy to read and follow.   It also makes learning and using the program a breeze.

WinFax PRO 4.0

Most of my exposure to fax software is with Delrina products for both Windows and DOS.   Delrina continues to impress with the release of WinFax PRO 4.0.   Even on my slow 386SX, WinFax performs admirably.

Delrina WinFax PRO

Fax | Log | Send | Receive | Setup | Services | Window | Help

Send | Outbox | Send Log | Rcv Log | Attach | Cvr Pgs | Phnbooks | New | Modify | View | Mnl Rcv | Exit

Receive Log

New Folder
Send Log
Receive Log
   To Be Done
Mothers-at-Home
The INK Spot

X ✓	🏷🖼	Date	Time	Pages	To/From
✓	📠	22-Aug-94	09:12:44	3	From: Delrina Fax InfoLine

Fax 3 Page(s)

Display Information
Display Thumbnails
Display Fax View

Page 1   Page 2   Page 3

Ready   AUTO DEL   Office

Creating and sending faxes are just a matter of clicking a few buttons and filling in some blanks. In addition to creating cover pages and sending from WinFax, you can also send from within any Windows program by choosing WinFax as your printer. Depending on your hardware/software configuration, you can also use features such as Fax-a-File and Remote Retrieval. Fax-a-File allows you to send and receive data files in binary format rather than as fax images. With Remote Retrieval, you can call your computer from a remote location to retrieve received faxes.

If using a network and Microsoft Mail or Lotus cc:Mail, your e-mail is available from within WinFax for one-stop communications. With a TWAIN-compliant scanner, you have scan and fax capability from within one program.

Most impressive to me is the tracking and storage features of outgoing and incoming faxes and the phonebooks. You manage faxes much as you structure your DOS directories, filing by project, company, or whatever method suits you. Using keywords, billing codes, and filters, you can find any fax in short order. Phonebooks are created in a similar fashion. Entries are placed in multiple phonebooks, and again, keywords, billing codes, and filters are used to increase the flexibility of the system.

Other notable features include annotation which adds notes to faxes, Optical Character Recognition (OCR) that allows you to turn fax images into editable text files, and a seemingly endless array of cover pages. Because I am seldom happy with "pre-fab" forms, I find the flexibility of the Cover Page Designer especially delightful. It has powerful text and graphics features comparable to some stand-alone drawing programs. I created a custom cover page in

just minutes.

Even though WinFax PRO is attractive and functional in its freshly installed state, sooner or later you will find yourself wanting to rearrange and customize.   By tiling or cascading multiple windows, adding and deleting icons, and experimenting with graphical and text views, you will find the perfect setup.

WinComm PRO

While my experience with fax software is chiefly with Delrina products, I have used a variety of communications programs.   WinComm PRO easily beats other Windows communication packages.   WinComm is by far the most customizable program I've used. Commands are accessible from pull-down menus, the tool bar, icons, and keyboard shortcuts and macros.   Powerful script and programming language provides further options for automating the program.
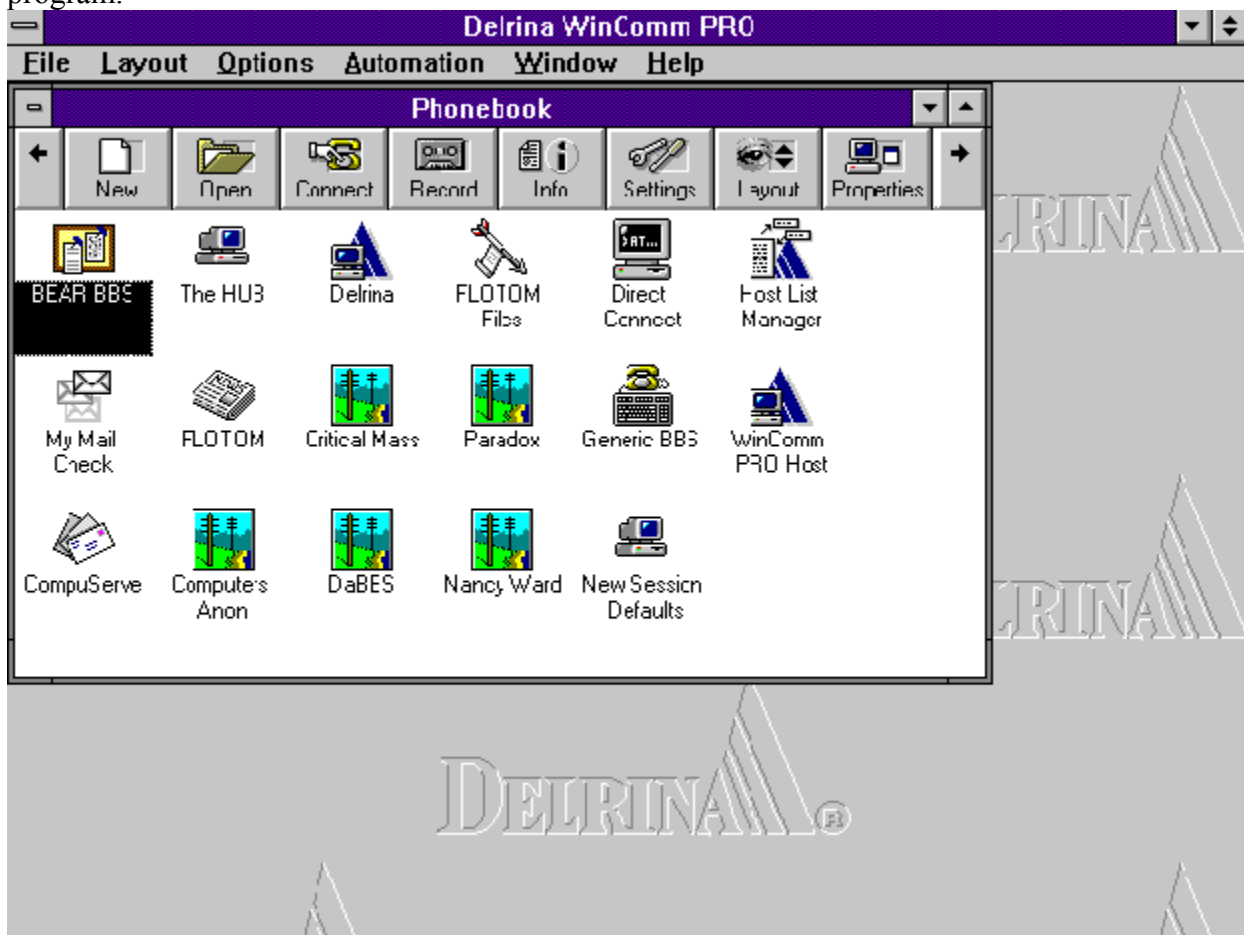
If you love icons and buttons, you'll love the icon view of the phonebook and the customizable tool bar.   Those who are more comfortable with text rather than pretty pictures can have it their way too. Several text-only views of the phonebook plus a text-only tool bar option are available.

It's easy to become absorbed in changing and rearranging icons and pushing buttons in search of the perfect look and feel.   Fortunately, WinComm works easily right out of the boxthe custom features simply make it more appealing to a wide range of users.

Once I got past how the program "looks" I was equally impressed with how it works.

The box says "Click and Connect" and it really is as simple as that.   Once on-line, WinComm makes composing and sending messages and uploading and downloading files a snap.   One of the handiest features is the Scratch Pad.   It allows you to compose and edit messages off-line and then upload the text easilyall from within WinComm.   The automation features make on-line sessions faster and easier too. Without even cracking the manual I constructed a simple script to logon to my own BBS, capture all my personal mail, and logoff.   I look forward to experimenting with more complicated tasks.

The optional Host mode lets you turn your computer into a mini-BBS.   Users can logon and transfer files without your assistance.   Running in Host mode can be useful if you need to access your own files from a remote location.   Security features allow callers to access only the areas you designate.

Other features not found in some popular Windows communications programs include split-screen session windows, drag-and-drop file transfer, and virus detection during download. Coming from Delrina, I expect WinComm to be a good program.   It's also loads of fun!

Technical Details

The programs install individually, or you can use the Master Install program to oversee the installation of both packages.   A full installation of both programs can take up as much as 14MB of hard disk space.   Custom installation allows you to omit certain options such as OCR or cover pages in WinFax or Host Mode files in WinComm.   Just as both options have a variety of configuration options, there are a variety of ways to contact Delrina for technical support. They maintain a forum on CompuServe, their own BBS, a Fax InfoLine, Fax Support, and Telephone Support.

The Suite

Integration between Windows programs is something I tend to expect.   Both WinFax and WinComm work well with other Windows programs and with each other. Although drag-and-drop is not new, I never took full advantage of it until trying out these programs.   You can drag-and-drop files from File Manager for faxing and for uploading quickly and smoothly.   WinFax and WinComm also peacefully co-exist on the same com port.   While WinFax runs in the background, I can call up WinComm for a little BBS cruising, and then when I'm done, WinFax takes over again waiting for faxes.   No more shutting one program down to start up another.

Delrina Communications Suite has two things going for it: WinFax PRO 4.0 and WinComm PRO.   Individually and combined, they are powerful, flexible, and easy-to-use communications tools for personal or business use.   It's a "suite" deal.

| Minimum Configuration: | Microsoft Windows 3.1 or later |
	IBM 386 and compatibles
	Compatible fax modem (some features require a Class 1 modem)
	11MB hard disk space
	4MB RAM

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Delrina Corporation

6830 Via Del Oro, Suite 200

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San Jose, CA 95119-1353
(408) 363-2345

Suggested Retail Price: $179.00 ($129 each individually)

Reach Out Remote Control Version 4.02
Pro Edition, Modem Version
review by
Don Pellegrino

"Reach Out Remote Control" is not your average communication program.   While it comes with the standard terminal application for connection to Bulletin Board Systems - CompuServe, Delphi, and the like, it offers much more.   "Reach Out" gives the user the ability to totally control a computer in the next room, office, or around the world.
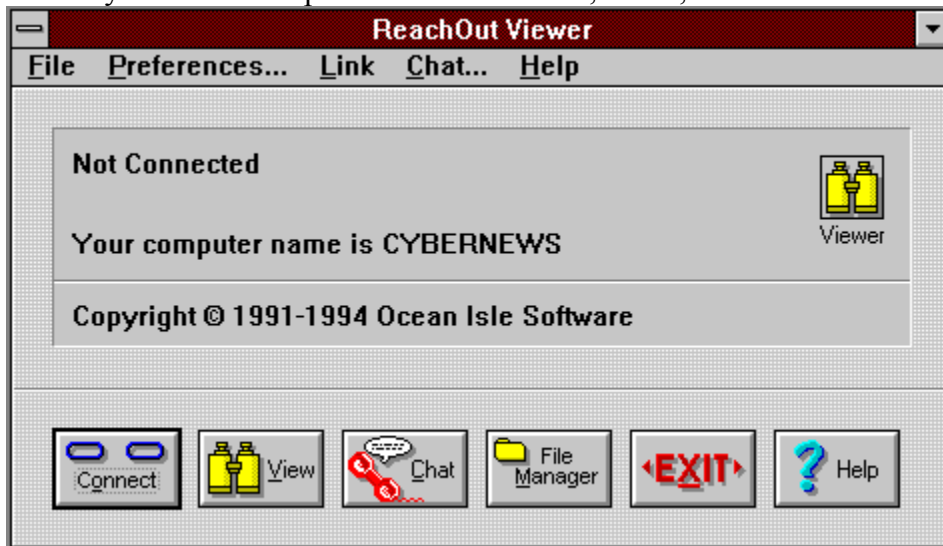
"Reach Out" is like a mininetwork between two systems that is created by a modem connection.   The first system, the one sitting in front of you, is referred to as the "viewer" and the second system, the one you wish was in front of you, is called the "host" system.   The viewer can transfer any file available to or from the host system.   It can run any application available on either system and be used to demonstrate procedures on the host system to the host user.   "Reach Out" offers a very advanced security system.

Installation: Above Average   Time Required: 13 minutes

The installation procedure is very simple and relatively fast.   Most of the time required was spent copying from the two floppies.   A minimal amount of technical information is required.   The list of pre-configured modems is huge.   You don't have to waste time filling in useless facts, such as the product serial number, as required by many other software manufactures.   At least 1 megabyte of disk space is required by the program, but with mine fully installed, 5MB is being consumed.

Documentation/Customer Support: Above Average

The User Manual is slightly repetitive and a little vague, but who spends time reading the manual anyway?   The package provides a handy quick-start guide and the program is pretty straightforward.   The on-line help is great and specific to each and every function.   Ocean Isle has its own BBS, (407) 778-2407, and offers a technical support fax, (407) 770-2533. CompuServe support is also supplied via "GO OCEANISLE." The tech support phone line, (407) 770-4777, is available 8:00 am to 8:00 PM Monday through Friday.   My call to customer

support took 3 minutes of hold time but when I got through the representative gave quick, knowledgeable answers.

Terminal Program: Below Average

"Reach Out" provides a terminal program specifically for connecting to BBSs, CompuServe, Delphi, and the like under the standard style of communication. It contains the bare minimum for such an operation, is slow, and a bit buggy. My system is running a 14400 baud modem and I usually get about 1660 average cps (characters-per-second). With RchTerm I only got about 1550 average cps. The Windows version of RchTerm does not minimize during a background file transfer. RchTerm Zmodem has had problems handling errors and hung-up or locked-up during file transfers. RchTerm does not contain any host program for a normal connection, and although it has a script language, there is no learn utility as in Telix, ProComm, CrossTalk, QModem, and various others.

Host and Viewer Programs: Above Average

The host and viewer systems which are the mainstay of "Reach Out" are excellent. At 14400 bps the DOS text mode programs operate at full speed. It's just like being there. The Windows programs also run at an swift rate, as long as they don't contain complex graphics such as wallpaper or detailed animation. Word Perfect, File Manager, and Program Manager all executed with the same fluency as if they were sitting in the 486 in front of you. The initial connection to a host system can be slowed by the display of wallpaper and the animation of CD-ROMs are quite sluggish. However, there is no way around that with all data moving via modem. You won't be able to play any action games with "Reach Out" but if you need to edit a last minute document or bring up a spreadsheet in either Windows or DOS this program is quite adept.

File Manager: Average

The "Reach Out" file manager is a very organized and simplified way of transferring files to and from the host system. It's worst point is that it is slow, on a connection of 14.4k I was only able to achieve an average cps of 1100 which is more characteristic of a 9600 baud connection. It's greatest trait is that it offers the ability to do background transfers allowing you to chat or operate the host from the viewer without canceling or delaying the transfer. Drive remapping is also possible with "Reach Out." This means that you could install a program from your a: drive to the host's d: drive.

Reliability: Average

I experienced some graphic errors on the viewer system after a color animation was run on the host and received a few Windows system errors now and then. When I tried to remove the "Reach Out" TSR from the Windows DOS Shell, Windows crashed and I was left permanently at the prompt. Despite that, the majority of operations went smoothly.

Synopsis: It will get the job done with ease. Beyond that...?

"Reach Out" is very easy to learn and understand, yet it offers many extra functions such as multilevel security and drive remapping. It doesn't do anything extraordinary with graphic programs or file transfer speed but it does do a great job with DOS text and standard Windows.

System Requirements and Recommendations:

IBM and 100% compatibles

MS or PC DOS 3.1 or higher, DR DOS 5.0 or higher

640K Standard Memory (Host TSR size is 14 to 52K)
At least 1 megabyte of available disk space
Windows-to-Windows supports resolutions up to 1280 x 1280, 256-color
Windows-to-DOS supports EGA, VGA and Super VGA resolutions up to 800 x 600, 16-color
DOS remote control for all text modes and CGA, EGA, VGA, MCGA and Hercules graphics
For Windows remote control: Microsoft Windows 3.0 or 3.1
Microsoft or Logitech compatible mouse
A Modem

Suggested List Price: $199.00
Network Version List Price: $295.00

Collage Complete
review by
Nathan Kay

My first impression of Collage Complete for Windows and DOS was formed long before I ever thought about reviewing this top-notch product by Inner Media, Inc.   My first impression was formed while reading The Mother of All Windows Books, an excellent guide to the universe of Windows.   As a side comment, the authors mentioned that their screen shots were taken with Collage Complete.   Since then, it's been in the back of my mind, so I was overjoyed when I received a copy to review.

The first thing I noticed upon opening the package were the two versions, one for DOS, the other for Windows.   My simple review had just turned complex.   While this gave me a few moments of unease as I thought of the extra work, I've found in working with the two versions that they complement each other well, and having both the DOS and Windows versions adds extra value to the package.

I'll start by talking about the Windows version, as that's the part I worked with first.   The Windows install program, like most install programs for newer pieces of software, is easy to use and simple enough that just about anyone could get through it without much trouble.   From the beginning, my impressions were all positive.

The Windows software consists of a capture program and an image manager, which work separately from each other.   The image manager is provided to view, catalog and perform basic manipulation of images, while the capture program exists to take screen shots in the Windows environment.

Collage Capture <ORIGINAL.SET>

File   Actions   View   Options   Help

| Capture Settings... |
| File Output Settings... |
| Printer Output Settings... |
| Preview... |
| Save Image to File |
| Print Image |
| Start Capture Now |

File Output Settings

Image Destination

◉ File   [Browse...]

C:\COLLWIN\SCREEN04.PCX

☒ AutoIncrement

[Customize AutoIncrement...]

○ Clipboard

[Help]

Adjustments

Brightness: 100 ◄ [   ] ►

[Sizing/Scaling...] [Transforms...]

Style
Format: PCX
Comp: Standard Compression
Type: 16 Color (4-bit)
Pattern: No Pattern

Cropping Area: left   top   width   height
Custom Coordinates   0   0   640   480

   The capture program runs like any other application, and offers many options.   When I ran it, I was presented with the main capture program, which allowed me to set capture options, and to capture to preview, or to capture to file.   In taking several screen shots, I found that each has its time and place.   For taking several screen shots in rapid succession, capture to file is unquestionably the method to use.   When taking a single shot, the capture to preview option allows for better control of the end result.   Of course, from the preview window, it's easy to save the preview to a file.   When I wanted to capture a screen, I found it easiest to minimize the capture program, then arrange the screen the way I wanted it.   From there, all I had to do was press the correct hot-key combination, and wait a few moments.   In a few seconds, I either had the screen captured to the preview window or to a file.   A wide range of file types and color depths are allowed, including black and white, gray-scale and all depths of color.

   The image manager is designed for easy access to basic image manipulation tools.   It's not an image editor, and doesn't have flashy features.   It's practical, easy to use, and flexible.   It can scan in graphics from any TWAIN compatible scanner, and decode many different file types.   Images may be cropped, cleaned up, combined and re-saved.   I found it easy to perform such functions as adding text, lines, borders and other objects.   I had no problems changing color depth, or altering image size.

   One of the great strengths of the image manager is a feature called collage.   Using collage, I created libraries of my various graphics files, and was able to use collage to view them by their filenames, a description that I entered for them, or by a thumbnail sketch that is essentially a small version of the graphic in question.   Without a doubt, I found collage to be one of the most useful functions I've found in a image manipulation program.

When I installed Collage for DOS, I had to spend quite a bit more time reading the operations manual than I did with the Windows software.   Where the Windows software had obvious features, and obvious ways of doing tasks, the DOS software wasn't quite so obvious in it's uses.   However, a few minutes reading the well written manual solved that problem.

The primary component in Collage for DOS is the TSR.   Because the full TSR takes a sizable amount of memory, Collage for DOS provides three TSR's: SNAP, SAVE and VIEW.   SNAP is the largest of these, and does the work of both SAVE and VIEW.   SAVE is the second largest, considerably smaller than SNAP.   SAVE's only use is to take a picture of the current screen in either PCX color, or TIFF gray-scale.   Despite seeming a little simple, SAVE does it's job very well.   VIEW exists to allow the user to view a PCX or TIFF picture from within any other program.   SHOW is a non-TSR program that views PCX and TIFF images, allowing zooming and normal viewing, but nothing else.

The main weakness of the DOS software is that there is no real equivalent of the Image Manager.   The VIEW and SHOW utilities are only for viewing.   Neither has the manipulation abilities of the image manager.

Working with Collage, I found that the minimum configuration I would recommend using would be a computer with a least four megabytes of RAM, a VGA card capable of displaying at least 256 colors, and a 386-25 CPU.   A less powerful CPU would still work, but the speed of graphics manipulation would be slower than I'd want to work with on a regular basis.   For hard disk space, I found that I only needed a megabyte or two for the programs, and another five megabytes for storing graphics images.

Simple yet powerful is my basic description of Collage Complete.   It's managed to do close to everything I've asked of it, often without requiring me to read the on-line help or manual.

Halo Desktop Imager
review by
Nathan Kay

A few weeks ago, when I was first told that I was going to be reviewing the Halo Desktop Imager by Media Cybernetics, my reaction was fairly apathetic.   To my mind, it was just another image editing product, bug-filled and hard to use, like so many other image editors I've used.   However, I was pleasantly surprised by what I got.   I found the Desktop Imager to be a stable and useable product, well worth looking into if you're in need of a high-powered graphics imager, or are willing to shell out a little extra money for a high quality viewer.

Upon receiving the evaluation copy, I found the install program to be professional and easy to use, making installing the Desktop Imager a simple task.   When I first started the program, I found myself at a simple screen (Shot #1).   From here, I could access the entire program.   As I started working, calling up graphics I've stored on my hard drive, I noticed that the imager loader worked quickly, finding and loading the graphics easily.   From the main screen, I could visually access the more basic features, such as brightness and contrast controls, as well as zooming.   As these are the functions I use the most often, having them right there in a simple point-and-click configuration was very useful.
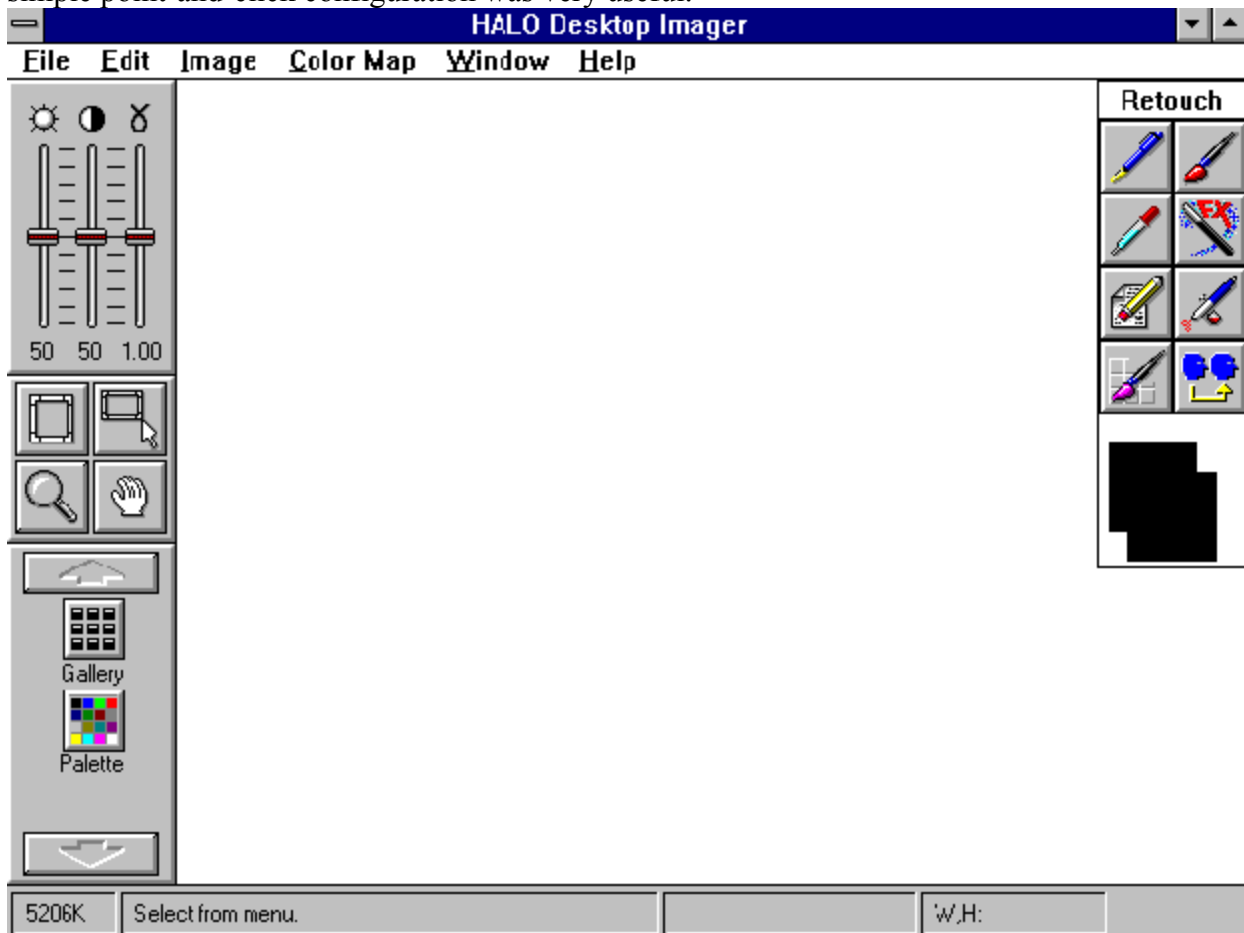
The other functions could all be accessed via the menu bar.   As with most programs, I

found that sometimes the item I was looking for wasn't on the menu I was excepting it to be on. However, with only a little bit of searching, I could find what I wanted and usually remember where it was the next time I needed it.

Unfortunately, while the program is for the most part a very stable product, it does have its own problem with errors.   For instance, when I choose to open a file, but accidentally selected .GIF as the file type, if I opened any other file type, instead of returning an error message, the program would cause a general protection fault.   This isn't a great problem, but that same lack of error handling ability is a common theme throughout the program.   It's stable, and mostly bug-free, but if something goes wrong, it tends to display a standard Windows error message, then terminate itself.   Again as the program is generally very stable, I don't rank this as being a major problem.

I found an interesting array of abilities packed into this product.   Among them is a very useable screen capture utility, which I'll talk more about later, a database system called Gallery, support for multiple file formats (though not as many as I'd like), a high quality printing system, an OLE server, and importantly, retouching tools.

The retouching tools were a source of great interest for me.   In this regard, the Desktop Imager goes far beyond a mere imager program, into the realms of full image editing abilities, and, if you're good enough at 'free-hand' drawing with a mouse, provides the tools for creating your own graphics.   Personally, I'm not very good at drawing using a mouse, so I didn't get too much into that function of the retouch tools.   However, the few times I tried retouching a picture, the few failures I ran into were my fault, and not the program's!   It's an added touch to this product that, to me, pushes it out into the forefront of its class.

The Gallery database system was also a source of interest.   I was able to easily use Gallery to collect my graphics files into sets, which could be viewed by filenames, descriptions, and even "thumbnail" sketches, which are small representations of the full image.   The thumbnail sketches are well done, and while not as good as the real picture, allowed me to visually identify each image in the Gallery.

I mentioned earlier the screen capture utility, of which I want to make special mention. While the screen capture utility included in the Desktop Imager isn't quite the quality of a dedicated screen capture utility, it does the job very nicely.   It allows you to set a countdown, giving you a certain amount of time between activation and the time the screen shot is taken to make sure everything is the way you want it.   I've found this feature quite useful.

In working with the Desktop Imager for roughly a week, I've developed a fair understanding of the basic software and hardware configuration that's needed for it to run well. First, I noticed that a graphics card that can display 256 colors or more is essential.   While the Desktop Imager will work with a mere 16 colors, a lot of the richness and fullness of having 256 colors is missing.   Secondly, four megabytes of RAM will do nicely, but when working with larger images, I often found myself wishing for extra RAM.   As is normal for Windows, the more RAM, the happier my programs will be.   Hard disk size isn't too much of a consideration, as the Desktop Imager is only five megabytes at full installation.   Regarding the CPU, anything better than a 386-25 would be fine in terms of speed.   Older 386 systems also do well, but cause longer waits than I'd find comfortable.   Personally I would never try running this product on a 286 computer, no matter how modified it may be.   In short, the Halo Desktop Imager is worth the price if you need high-quality graphics imaging and editing.

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ImagePals 2
review by
Madonna Johnson

Image Pals is a useful collection of tools that offer media cataloging, image editing, file conversion, and screen capture in separate modules. The program can be a very versatile tool for a wide range of users from all aspects of computing. While reviewing the program, I was directly looking for ways that are useful to a desktop publisher since that's where my main interests lie. The most appealing feature to me was the cataloging module. The imaging editing module has a number of very interesting special effects filters while the screen capture module can also be very useful.

The media cataloging feature in ImagePals 2 is a versatile tool that makes cataloging files of all types a breeze. I experimented with cataloging a wide range of clip art as well as a directory of PageMaker 5.0 and miscellaneous other files. Since Aldus does not include any file description features similar to Word For Windows or Corel that allow you to write a short description for each file, this could prove to be an invaluable tool for cataloguing files.

This was a worthwhile experiment. I was able to catalogue easily and although the book is certainly useful for learning about all the many tools within Album, I was able to just jump in and start experimenting before I even picked it up.

The catalogue features the ability to input long description lines and add seemingly unlimited keywords for each of the thumbnails created for any graphics. In addition, each file that is catalogued can be entered into a subject category. Search options are very simple yet effective in finding files once they are catalogued. Viewing the file of a thumbnail is as easy as double clicking. The actual file can be displayed and appears much larger than the thumbnail, but not quite a quarter of the screen size.

ImagePals 2 comes bundled with its own global viewer for many graphic types. Some file types that are incompatible with the global viewer are "associated" with programs in the

same way that Windows associates files.   For example, double clicking on a CorelDraw! file automatically executes Corel and brings up the file.   The same occurs when cataloging PageMaker 5.0 files.   A simple double click launches PageMaker and allows you to view or edit that file.   With programs like PM 5.0 that don't include their own file viewer or allow you to include file descriptions with the file name like Corel does, this will be an invaluable time saver for unarchived backup copies of files.

        The actual cataloguing of files, as always, can be a time consuming task.   Ulead Systems has taken measures to ensure that the process is as simple as possible.   For example, one test that I tried was to work with some samples from a clip art collection.   I catalogued a directory of over a hundred images and spent only about 15 minutes from loading the images to typing in the image names.

        While entering keywords, I did not ever have to take my hands off the keyboard.   All the commands flow easily.   Once a keyword has been entered once, the system will always keep it "handy" for repeated use later.   For example, a set of several images of children with baseball related items were keyed in a matter of a few seconds.   The first image I entered a description of "a boy holding a baseball mitt and wearing a cap."   I entered keywords of BOY, BASEBALL, MITT, and CAP and created a subject group called Sports Children.   The second image was entered with a description of "girl holding baseball bat over her shoulder and is wearing a baseball cap."   I entered as keywords, GIRL, and the letters   "Ca" and up popped the word Cap. Next I entered the letters "Bas" and the rest of the word Baseball appeared.   The same thing occurred with other images as I encountered repeating keywords.   The descriptions are as easy to enter as they appear above.   There is enough room to enter an entire paragraph if needed. The program is very intuitive and saves numerous keystrokes whenever possible.

        Once keywords are entered for images, a word search query can be entered by entering keywords to find particular images.   For example, entering the word baseball and cap would bring up all images with both words as keywords.   Using "or" in the search while using the same words would search in a completely different way.

        The screen capture module in Image Pals doesn't stand out in the crowd as far as having any specifically wonderful features.   When capturing images, one or more destinations for the capture file must be designated before beginning.   The destination can be to a file, to a screen capture, to the clipboard, to the printer or directly into the image editor.   The capture feature allows you to choose exactly which part of the screen display that should be captured.   You can select from the active window, or simply parts of the screen.   The convert data type group box allows you to convert captured images to a specific data type.   The resolution can be adjusted as necessary.   When viewed on screen the capture files are extremely "bit mappy."   The writing is almost illegible on screen although once printed out the images are much easier to see.   The contrast is tricky to adjust, but with practice you learn that changing to a monochrome display before taking screen shots allow the files to be printed lighter.

        The Image Editing Module is a distant rival to some of the more well known power programs.   The Image Editor by no means offers as many features as similar programs, but the tools that are included within the program allow a great variety of editing.   With these tools you could easily create, compose, change and improve any type of image, from black & white to true color.

        With this overview in mind, I would like to see the modules available individually as well as packaged together, specifically the Album as a front runner program.   For people who don't already own a full featured   program, they may find that they could save several hundred dollars

by investing in ImagePals 2.0.

ImagePals is available for $129 at in introductory price.   For registered users of ImagePals 1.0 and 1.2, the upgrade is available for only $49.

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Northbrook, IL   60062
(708) 291-1616

trueSpace
review by
Judy Litt

      Caligari's trueSpace is not for the faint of heart.   If you have some 3D experience, it is probably fairly easy to learn.   If you know next to nothing about 3D, like me, it is much more daunting - but you can still create neat graphics with it.

      Caligari states, "If you are a graphic artist, designer or video professional using Windows, you need Caligari trueSpace, the first 3D graphics application with a natural user interface. With trueSpace, you can produce photorealistic images beautiful enough for the cover of Time magazine or video animation professional enough for the CBS Evening News. It is also easy enough for a 6 year old to use."   I beg to differ with that last statement.

      Almost every action you take in trueSpace is done by clicking on an icon.   There are almost no menus to wade through.   Right clicking on icons generally brings up a panel with more options.   If you run your monitor at 1024 x 768 resolution, the icons will be in one row - otherwise they occupy at least two rows.   You can arrange the icons either at the top or bottom of the screen.   There's also a help bar on the bottom which can be turned on or off.   When the mouse cursor is over an icon and the help bar is turned on, you will see an explanation of the icon and the keyboard shortcut for the icon if there is one assigned.   You can also assign your own keyboard shortcuts to icons.
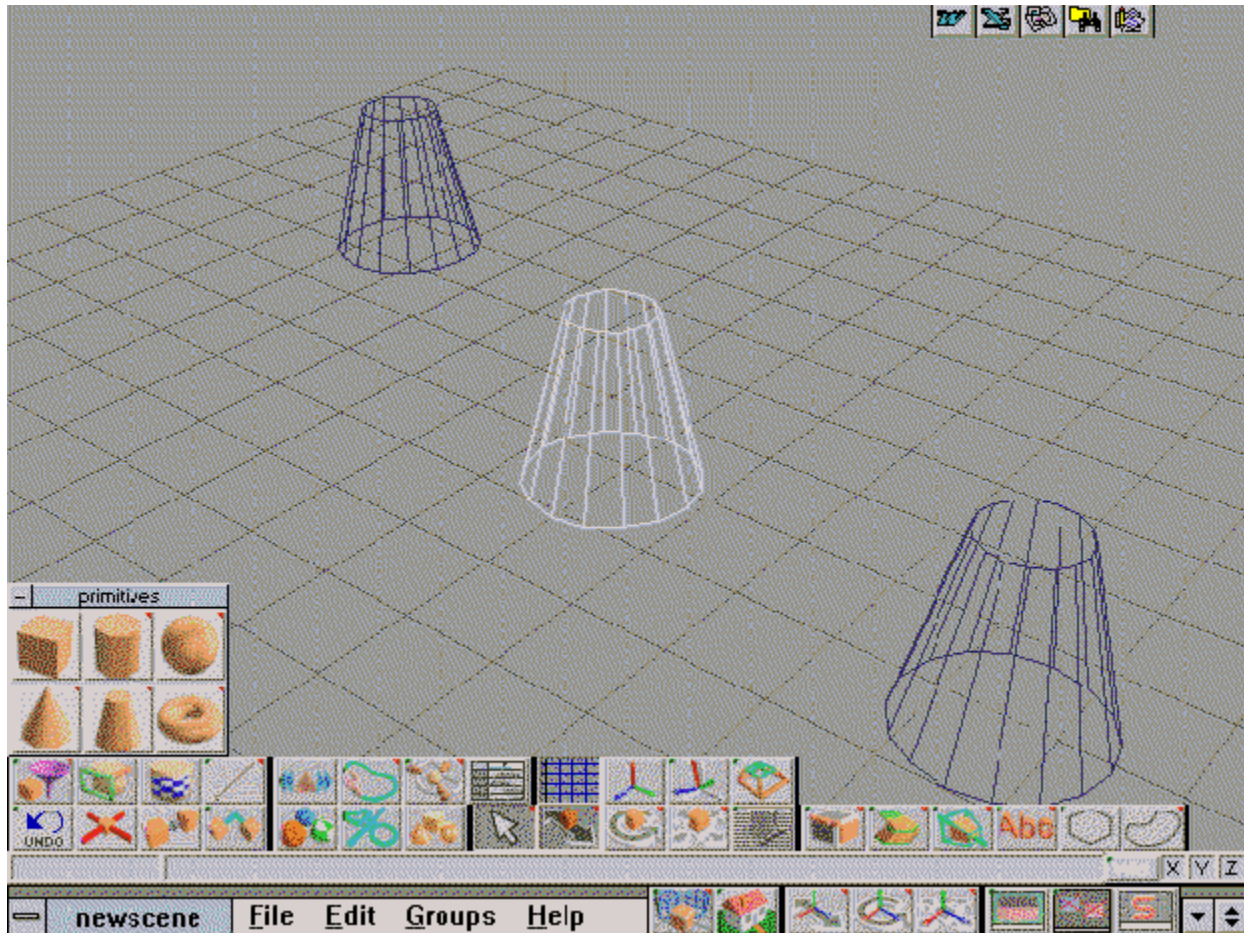
       I haven't decided yet whether all those icons are a good thing.   They certainly clutter up the screen.   Since there are so many, they are quite small and certain ones are difficult to recognize.   You can close all open panels with a single click of the mouse - on an icon, naturally!

       The manual begins with several tutorials.   Then there are sections explaining each icon group, its functions, and its panels.   Mini-tutorials are included in the explanations. The tutorials in the front should follow the explanations.   When I tried to follow them, I got lost - I couldn't find the particular icon I needed or I couldn't decipher the instructions.   Instructions such as "move the mouse pointer over the front bottom center vertex of the box, at the bottom center of the subdivided polygons" might be more understandable if accompanied by a diagram.

       I'd also like to see a discussion of some 3D basics for novices like myself.   Terms like planarity, vertex, and ray tracing are never adequately explained.   Of course, the manual is already over 300 pages long.   A second manual, a primer on 3D, would be useful.

       One thing you'll notice about trueSpace - it's fast.   3D programs are notorious for taking forever to render (draw).   Caligari's trueSpace represents objects in a wireframe mode - you see just the frame of the object.   You can render one object or an entire scene.   Rendering an entire scene is still fast - but may be longer than you want to wait.   I found the best way to render scenes was to add a new perspective.   This adds a small window to the screen - you see everything the same as you do on the desktop, only smaller.   You can change the perspective of the new window: for instance, get a top perspective in the new window and a left perspective from the main window.   You can render the scene only in the new perspective if you wish.

Since the new perspective window is much smaller than the main desktop, rendering it takes much less time.

You cannot print directly from trueSpace.   You must first render the scene to a file in .BMP, .TGA, or .AVI format.   Support for the .TIF format is noticeably lacking, but is supposed to be offered in an upcoming release.   Once you've rendered to a file, you can open the rendered file that supports that format and then print it.

Caligari's trueSpace includes a small amount of material libraries and objects. Materials are essentially "textures" that can be applied to objects, although some are definitely too colorful to be a real texture.   Objects are 3D clipart.   A CD-ROM with additional textures and objects is supposed to be available to registered users (due to ship in late September).   An existing .BMP can also be imported and applied to a face of an object.

If you're already familiar with 3D, trueSpace is a good value.   It's fast.   I don't find the interface quite as user friendly as Caligari claims, but after a week I was comfortable with it. What could you use trueSpace for?   Marketing communications, animation, training, scientific illustrations, prototyping new products, and architectural walkthroughs and simulations.

System Requirements: Windows 3.1
         6 MB hard drive space
         4 MB RAM (16 MB recommended)

List price: $795. Until Sept. 30, 1994, owners of any 2D paint or draw package can purchase trueSpace for $499.

Caligari Corporation
1955 Landings Drive
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Type Twister
review by
Judy Litt

According to Aldus, Type Twister is an "easy-to-use type enhancement program for Windows and Macintosh that turns words into wild, colorful art." The emphasis of this program is to make easily available to the non-artist special type effects.

Aldus certainly fulfills their mission - this program is easy to use with virtually no learning curve involved. The manual is roughly 30 pages, and perhaps half of that is devoted to installation and support. You can certainly be up and running without reading the manual.
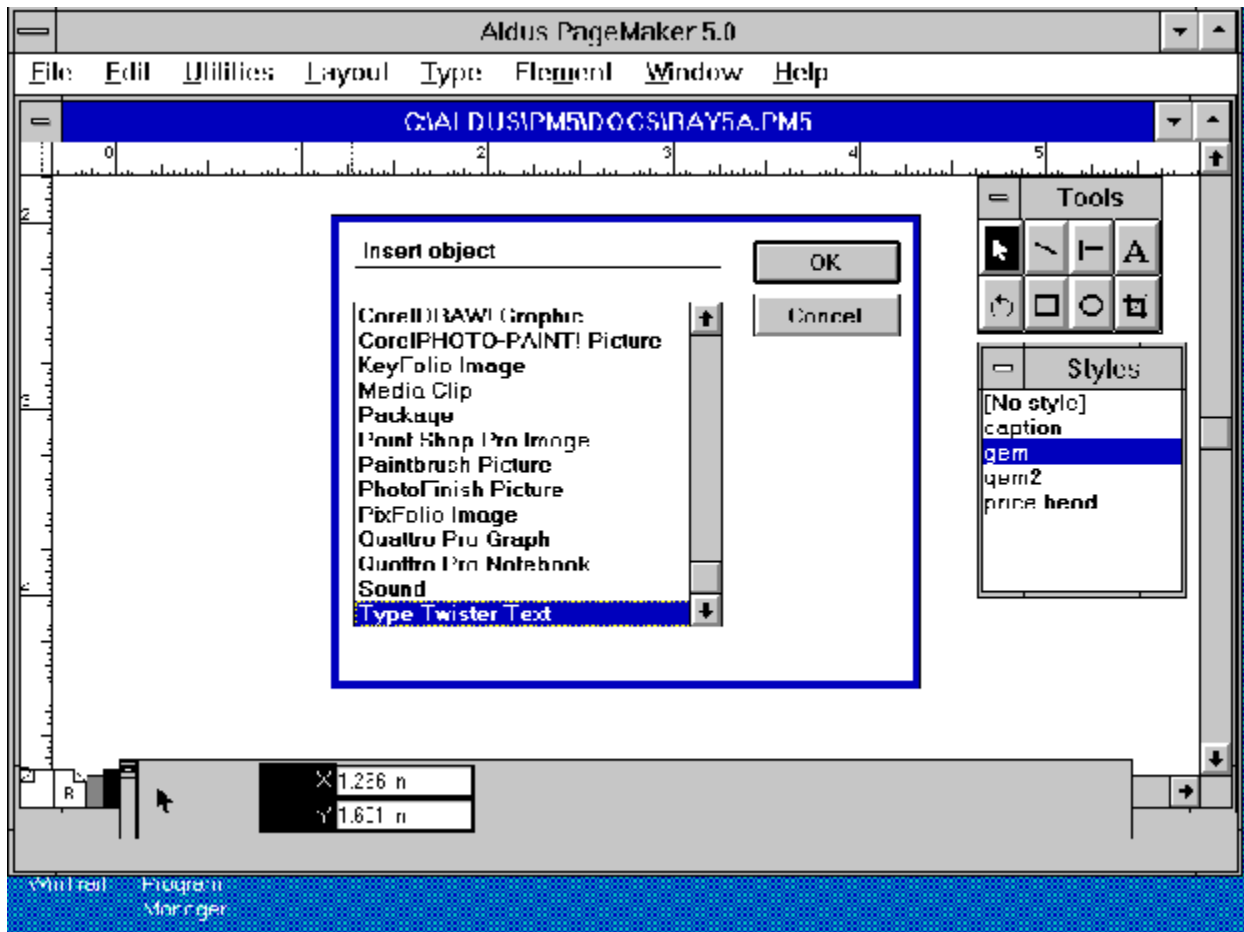
Installation is quick and painless. There are instructions in the manual and on the first disk.   The installation screen shows you how much space Type Twister will occupy, although not how much space you have free on your hard drive (a minor inconvenience, since the program only occupies approximately 2 MB hard drive space!).   Installation automatically inserts your registration number.   You also have the option, at the end, to fill in the registration form on your screen and then print it out.   If you choose to skip this phase, as I did, there is also a registration card at the front of the manual.

The only problem I had with the installation is the fact that you cannot do a custom installation.   Type Twister comes with twenty fonts - you are never given a choice on whether or not you want to install these fonts.   I can only assume that the fifty pre-set designs use these fonts.

Type Twister comes with fifty built-in designs (design buttons).   You can use these as is, or as a starting point for your own designs.   You may add another fifty custom designs.   You can delete any custom designs you have added, but you cannot delete the built-in designs.

You can change the style, alignment, color, font, shape, and effect of any design. Designs may also be rotated, stretched, condensed, and sheared (skewed).   The combinations are literally endless.

There are two ways to get Type Twister designs into your documents: the first is cutting and pasting.   Where Type Twister shines, though, is OLE. Type Twister designs can be embedded into documents through the Insert Object command on the Edit menu of those programs that support OLE.   Once embedded, double click on the Type Twister design to open the program and edit your design.   In fact, the only way to see your Type Twister designs is by placing them into a document - you cannot print them from Type Twister.

Aldus PageMaker 5.0

File   Edit   Utilities   Layout   Type   Element   Window   Help

C:\ALDUS\PM5\DOCS\RAY5A.PM5

Tools

Insert object

OK

Cancel

CorelDRAW! Graphic
CorelPHOTO-PAINT! Picture
KeyFolio Image
Media Clip
Package
Point Shop Pro Image
Paintbrush Picture
PhotoFinish Picture
PixFolio Image
Quattro Pro Graph
Quattro Pro Notebook
Sound
Type Twister Text

Styles

[No style]
caption
gem
gem2
price head

X 1.236 n
Y 1.671 n

Program
Manager

What Type Twister does, it does very well.   It could use some modifications for the serious artist.   You can change the colors of the type - but only to some pre-selected colors available in Type Twister.   You cannot modify colors at all - a very large drawback for the professional designer.

Text in Type Twister appears with a bounding box - in fact, if you're familiar with CorelDRAW!, it looks very similar to the bounding box found when you use the edit envelope option.   It does not function quite the same, though.   There are eight handles on the box.   All eight allow you to resize the bounding box.   Two handles - the upper right and middle right - have another handle coming out of them.   The outside handle on the upper right allows you to shear or skew the type by clicking it and dragging.   The middle outside handle allows you to rotate the type by clicking and dragging.

If the effect you choose contains more than one line, you can manipulate the color, font, and effect of each line.   You can add lines to a one line preset design, but the entire design is still one group.   You can change the color, effect, etc., but those changes will apply to all the lines in the group.   There is no way to change a one line design to a design that contains two lines as distinct groups.

There are several other software packages similar to Type Twister, including: Effects Specialist, Font-O-Matic, and TrueEffect.   Although, none of these packages offer preset designs or OLE support.

Type Twister is easy to use and learn.   It lacks some features that a serious graphic designer needs, such as true customizable colors and kerning.   However, even though I already

own several professional drawing programs, I may very well use Type Twister when I need a colorful type effect fast.   The support for OLE 1.0 is a big plus in my book.

System requirements: 386 or higher
                     Windows 3.1 or higher
                     2 MB RAM
                     2 MB hard disk space
                     VGA or better monitor

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5120 Shoreham Place
San Diego, CA   92122
(714) 454-8056

SRP: $49.95
Street Price: $29.95

The End Of Programmers?!
by
Hugh W. (Chip) Cox

       I was talking about how I wanted to get back into programming and out of support with one of my cousins the other day.   He informed me that programmers are not needed any more. "There are hundreds of programs out there that write programs for you.   Support is the place to be," he said.   Personally, I don't think so.   At least I definitely hope he is not right.   The office managers and CEOs are saying, "I can create my own spread sheets; I can write my own database queries."   Even some programmers are saying that Visual Basic does most of the work for you.   It won't be long until something comes out that can do it all.   I am not saying that non-software companies will always have programming departments.   In addition, I strongly believe that support is an often overlooked need in our industry. However, there are a couple of reasons I don't believe that programming will die anytime soon.

       First and foremost, programming will be kept in tact to make corporate America money. Who out there thinks that XYZ Corp. will stop producing new operating systems or environments?   Who thinks ABC INC. will stop coming up with new more powerful chip designs with more features?   Each new operating system or environment has a new set of functions available to end users.   Not to mention the fact that XYZ Corp. will have to keep a couple of programmers on hand to write the new operating systems.   XYZ Corp. will also probably not do things the way that everyone wants them done.   Some people, due to a protest vote or something, may not want to buy XYZ Corp.'s version of the operating system. Programmers will be called on again to put the new features now available into a different package with the look and feel they want.   New compilers will also be needed to produce new versions of products that take advantage of the new features available in the new operating system on the new chip.   Guess what? Programmers will have to write significant portions of the code for these new compilers.   Other programmers will have to use these new compilers to write their new applications.   Even the programs that write programs will have to be rewritten by programmers to take advantage of the new features.

       Secondly, twelve year old kids!   Do you realize how many ideas were initially voiced by the children of programmers?   My three year old already knows what a mouse is (not the furry thing on the ground eating cheese).   Granted, he uses a keyboard to hit his brother, but he is starting to get interested in non-violent uses for a computer.   By the time he is eight, he will be fighting me for time on my computer.   By the time he is twelve, he will be coming up with new ideas of things he wants a computer to do.   Some of these ideas, while decidedly juvenile, will find their ways into the mainstream of corporate America.   Better graphics in shoot-em-up games led to the technology used in today's animated movies and corporate product demonstration software.   Games that simulate flight result in better techniques to enhance flight trainers.   Guess who gets to produce most of these things?   You've got it, programmers!   The problem with most of the software packages that write programs for you is that they don't know anything about new techniques.   The twelve year old in all of us is responsible for the dream of what could be.   The dream of what a computer can accomplish for us.   After all, the more work the computer does for us, the sooner we can get out to play golf, watch the baseball players strike, or play Doom.

       Finally, and this is strictly my belief, I like programming.   To me it is an art form.   It is a

wonderful experience to start with a blank screen and a dream of what could be and make the dream reality.   Programming incorporates almost every aspect of life.   The joy of seeing a dream made real.   The frustration of undocumented system calls and compiler bugs (features). The exhaustion of 20 hours typing behind a keyboard.   The pains in your wrist from typing all day.   The amazement of what comes out when you disengage your mind and let your fingers type.   Every feature you give programmers becomes a challenge, and every challenge is an opportunity.   As most people, programmers thrive on the challenges and changes of life. Programmers love to find the answers that make life easy again.   Programmers will always find something that needs to be done better, and they will work at making it happen.   Programmers are idealists and dreamers.   Until Star Trek and Commander Data become reality and computers begin to dream, programmers will continue weaving the dreams of society into reality.   If you think about it, someone even had to program Commander Data.   :-)

WHAT RUSH LIMBAUGH,   BILL CLINTON, AND HOWARD STERN HAVE IN COMMON THAT WE SHOULD EMULATE:
A COMMENTARY

Having just returned from the annual conference of the National Association of Radio Talk Show Hosts, we are imbued with renewed appreciation for the freedom of speech our nation affords and duly impressed with the value of individual expression. Here was a gathering of over 300 individuals, all of whom were articulate and   not the least bit hesitant to express their heartfelt opinions on virtually any subject.   What an experience!   There were no wallflowers in earshot.

Among the names most frequently mentioned during the conference (outside of O.J. Simpson, of course,) were Rush Limbaugh, Bill Clinton, and Howard Stern, none of whom were present, although Clinton prepared a videotaped message that was played for the conference.

The popularity, or should I say, infamy, of these three individuals amongst this august group, got me thinking about what three such seemingly diverse individuals have in common. And, indeed, it is their individuality that they share most notably.

They don't hold back in expressing precisely who they are, even at the expense of being highly criticized.   That, in fact, we learned during numerous sessions, is the chief characteristic of what makes for a good talk show host.   Yes, a host must be informative, persuasive, and entertaining, but it's not how precisely, politically correct, politely, or acceptably one goes about it that makes the difference.   Instead, success seems to lie in how fully the host can express the essence of who and what he or she is.

And there lies a message for us all. In our own businesses, fortunately or unfortunately, it's usually not just competency that determines our success, but instead it's the extent to which we can "make a name for ourselves" as someone who does whatever WE do.   Just like Rush, Bill, or Howard, if we are to succeed, we have to summon the courage to be and express who WE are if we are to stand out from the myriad of others who do similar things.

Does that mean we have to be extreme like Rush and Howard?   Absolutely not! Few people would characterize Clinton as extreme.   It only means that we can be neither a copy nor a reprint of anyone else.   And, in the industrialized world of salaried jobs so many of us have come from, doing that is unusual.   We've been carefully taught to fit in, to not "stand out like a sore thumb." (Isn't that a revealing turn of phrase?)

Here we are, a species in which each and every one of us is as unique and different as a snowflake -- right down to our fingerprints and DNA.   And yet, all our lives we've been encouraged to become as indistinguishable as possible one from another in anything but the most inconsequential details, such as the color of our ties or the type of earrings we wear.   Is it any wonder we hunger to hear people like Rush, Bill and Howard! They are making a clear statement, whether or not it's one we agree with.

And indeed, that's what we each must do in defining ourselves in our businesses. We need to stand out, not like a sore thumb, but like a green thumb, a blue thumb, or an orange thumb, so that those seeking green, blue, or orange will flock our way.   We cannot settle for being Carl, the computer consultant; Dale, the Desktop Publisher; Brenda, the Bookkeeper; and Imogene the Information Broker.   If we are to become more than glorified temps, our businesses need to be expressions of our unique talents, skills, styles, and personalities.

It's only by expressing our individual talents and personalities as brilliantly as possible that

we will make a loud enough statement that those needing, or simply preferring, what we offer will hear about us, come running, and send everyone else like them. In other words, that's how we will build a following.

We can't try to be all things to all people. We have to take stands on:

⇒ What we offer
⇒   To whom we offer it
⇒   How, where, and when we go about offering it

We have to drop the fear that we might lose out on every possible piece of work if we are to get the kind of work that is right for us; the work that will help us gain a reputation for which people will gladly and consistently pay us well. If we distinguish our work in such a way that customers know no one can do it the way we do, so one else will be able to fill OUR slot.

So, if you ever hope to be the best you can be, be 100 percent who you are in all that you do!

CD Essentials
review by
Madonna Johnson

CD Essentials is Windows software that is advertised as enabling you to control a CD-ROM drive fast, easily and automatically. The program can be used to install CD's or it can be used to automatically launch programs or media on each CD. The friendly interface looks like a remote control that you would have lying around your house. The CD has an LCD-like display that shows the different options available to you and also includes a display of what types of files are detected on the active CD drive.

CD Essentials includes a multimedia player that resembles a home entertainment system. The player recognizes AVI Video, MIDI, WAV, audio, image and Kodak Photo CD files. When any of the above mentioned files are sensed, the player automatically launches the appropriate component to play them.

The image player builds thumbnails of any image that you add to the playlist. You can view these images individually or create a slideshow to view them. The video player allows you to watch animation clips by using Microsoft Video for Windows. Creating a playlist for viewing is much the same as with the image player. You can view clips in a window or full screen. While experimenting with the full screen viewer, I experienced several general protection fault errors due to an obvious incompatibility with my video driver. Viewing in a window created no problems. The main problem with the video viewer is that the image of the .AVI file was sometimes cropped off in the viewing window. Overall, I was very impressed with the Video/.AVI player interface. It appears to look much like a TV screen. I sampled it by setting up a playlist as a slide show.   I used some files included with the New Groliers Encyclopedia. Most of the .AVI files were too big to be played in full screen mode and any attempt resulted in Windows completely locking up.   Many of the animation clips that I played were animated charts that included subtitles and brief paragraphs under or on the image. Many of these were cropped so that parts couldn't be seen.

The controls for both viewers are very simple to use without even reading the small manual that is provided with the program. Choices for playing the images can be set to sequence, shuffle, loop or single play. Each of these options plays the files exactly like it says. Sequence displays the files as they appear in the playlist. Shuffle will randomly choose files from the playlist and play each one until everything in the queue has played. Loop will continuously play images until you manually stop it, while single simply plays one file.

The MediaRak includes an Audio player that includes a Mixer Module, CD Module, DAT (Digital Audio Transport) Module and a MIDI Module. You can listen to your favorite musical CDs while working in other Windows applications.   Once a CD is playing, the main power can be shut off and you will exit the program and the CD will continue to play using the playlist and command that you have set.   This allows memory to be freed up for other programs that you are running.   The DAT Module lets you play and record digital audio files in .VOC or .WAV file formats. The MIDI module lets you play MIDI files using a built-in synthesizer and/or through an external MIDI connector. You can record song files from an external keyboard as well. The accompanying MIDI Orchestrator allows you to modify or edit each track in a MIDI file.

The Audio Player uses a familiar stereo interface that makes it easy to work with sound files.   You can easily play audio tracks from your CD-ROM drive by controlling your sound

card mixer functions and by creating playlists for digital audio, MIDI and CD audio.   You have the same playback option modes as with the Video Player.

The systems requirements according to the documentation are: A multimedia PC that includes a 386SX or better microprocessor, a CD-ROM drive and an audio board, VGA or SVGA display with 256 colors, minimum 4 megabytes of RAM, Microsoft Windows 3.1 and MS-DOS 3.1 or later.   The minimum hard drive space needed is 4 MB.

My system is currently running in VGA mode. When the viewer didn't show the whole screen on the .AVI files that I experimented with, I chose the option to view in full screen. Each time I did,   my system either locked up completely or I experienced a general protection fault. I was unable to determine whether the incompatibility was due to my video driver or other circumstance.

Phoenix Technologies advertises to offer free technical support, but the registration card offers an option to waive support in lieu of receiving your choice of several of their books or other software packages.

In my opinion CD Essentials is a very good program. I did find it very similar in many ways to the remote control software that comes bundled with SoundBlaster multimedia kit. Many of the features are duplications of software that people may already have if they purchased an entire multimedia kit. For those who bought their hardware individually this could be the answer for them.

Checkit-Pro
Advanced Diagnostic Software
review by
Wayne MacLeod

Check-It Pro ADS consists of two separate but complementary packages, SysInfo and Test & Tools.   Between the two you can identify the individual components of your system and perform detailed diagnostic tests of those components.   It is the type of software that many of us have on our to get list and everyone should have.   It can be as useful to the novice, as to the power user, and the rest of us in between.

The installation program is smooth and straight forward and makes no changes to any files on your system.   Earlier versions of the software gave the choice of installing both programs or just one of them, this version installs both only.   Both programs are started separately and there is no real integration or info sharing.   A menu to at least give the appearance of integration would be of benefit.   Both programs are DOS programs and can be run under MS Windows, but this is not recommended.   It is also noted that there may be some inconsistent results of testing a hard drive using disk compression such as Stacker or DoubleSpace.

SysInfo provides information about the hardware in your machine as well as the operating system. It also allows you to generate and save reports about your system for future comparison, use in upgrade decisions, determining incompatibilities or whatever you choose.   It also offers a simple mechanism of editing information in your primary DOS and Windows files as well as a general text editor for other files.

The system area gives you a breakdown of what you have in your system, both graphically and in text format. It had little difficulty identifying the correct hardware and software versions on my system, even determining that   I have a CAS modem.   It did incorrectly identify my Intel SatisFAXtion 400 modem as a US Robotics 9600 and reported 16450 UARTs where there were 8250 UARTs, but otherwise was flawless in this area.

The Memory section gives a breakdown on the various types of memory installed in your system.   It reports total amounts, amounts in use, available, and even reports what programs are using what address areas. There is also a report of TSRs currently installed and their usage and location in memory.

The Setup section provides information such as your CMOS data, also allowing you to edit the data in CMOS.   It reports dip switch settings if appropriate, IRQ usage and interrupt vectors. It also gives a run down of the device drivers installed, BIOS data and your hard drive table.   This area offers several "dangerous" features, such as editing the CMOS and examining unknown I/O addresses. Users should use caution commensurate with their knowledge and abilities.   These areas do present warnings to the

user before allowing you to perform the actual function.

The DOS and Windows sections provide information about your settings under those programs and allow for editing of the info in your autoexec.bat, config.sys and major Windows initialization files.

The Performance section allows you to run tests on your system in general, your hard drive and your video card.   There are several comparison files provided for use in looking how your system stacks up to some fairly generic systems.   You can also record your own results to be used as a comparison when you make changes to your system or   problems arise

The Help section provides detailed context sensitive help as well as Tech Support info and a reference library that covers topics from an ASCII character chart to installation tips to information on Viruses identified by the Test & Tools software.

Test & Tools provides for extensive testing of your hardware and tools to repair or simplify recovery from a major crash.   The test suite can be run all at once or as individual tests.   There is also a quick test provision as well as a Burn-in test and Certification test.   The "Test Everything" option runs diagnostic tests on your memory, hard drive(s), floppy drives, system board, serial ports, parallel ports, video, mouse and joystick.   To fully test your memory, you must remove any memory manager and reboot your system. There is also provision for making, saving and printing individual reports of test results.   A journal is kept of all activity during the testing that can also be saved, displayed and or printed.

The Tools section provides options designed to prepare you for a system crash and help recover from a disaster.   It allows low level formatting of "more hard drives than any other formatter."   I did not test this ability. Their is an included virus scanner that provides for detection only, not cleaning of any detected virus.   This scanner is only as good as the information it has to work with and will require supplemental updates to stay current.   There is the ability to create a rescue disk that can be used to boot your system in case of a hard drive crash and includes those files needed to get you going after the disaster.   You can also save the drivers that your system requires to start up to the rescue disk or to a separate disk.   You can also save a record of your CMOS settings.   A rescue disk and a copy of your CMOS settings are the minimum that anyone should have   available in case of trouble.

Overall, Check-It pro is a very nice DOS program that does all that it claims to do and does it well.   It is simple enough for the new user, but powerful enough for the experienced user also.   One nice feature is the ability to use many of the individual applets from Test and Tools as stand alone tests via batch files.   They can be used to create custom setup and testing situations.   The only thing I found disappointing with Check-It Pro was its unpredictability when run under MS Windows, though there is now a Windows specific version with enhanced features.   If you don't do Windows, this program should easily fill your needs.

Requirements: DOS 3.0 or later
            512 K RAM
            Minimum of 2 MB of disk space

MSRP $149.95

TouchStone Software Corp.
2130 Main St., Suite 250
Huntington Beach, CA 92648
1-800-531-0450

PC-Install
review by
Ryan N. Yetter

       I recently tried out a version of PC-Install from 20/20 Software.   This utility allows someone without any prior programming experience to write a customized installation utility while maintaining enough functionality that even a knowledgeable user would find it very useful.
       Say you are asked by your boss to update a program on every computer in the office. The only problem is that you also have to edit the settings in the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT file.   If you were to do this at just ten computers it could take nearly an hour. That's assuming that everyone needed the same files and everyone had the program in the same directory.   If this is not the case, then it could take you four or five hours to accomplish this task. Here is where PC-Install comes in.   In about 15 minutes you can write an installation routine which will update the CONFIG.SYS file and the AUTOEXEC.BAT file and install the correct files to the correct directory.   If you are having the user install it, the installation routine will also display a message telling them what the disk is for and how to install it.
       Now, let's say you are in charge of computer maintenance at a larger company with a thousand computers at 20 locations across the country.   You need a program to perform a specific task and a programming firm was hired at several hundred dollars an hour to write it. You could spend the extra money on having an installation utility written to install it, or you could write one yourself saving the company a great deal of money.   In the same fifteen minutes used in the last example, you could write a utility to install the program on every one of those computers at each of those 20 locations.   Since most larger companies would want it to look nice it might take 30 minutes to fully customize the colors and get the background you want. This would still save your company a great deal of money!
       You can see that PC-Install would be useful in a variety of scenarios especially with its many other options.   You can add a customized title to the screen in any size font that will fit. In the DOS version you can set ten different screen sections to 8 different colors with varying brightness. In the Windows version you can change the color of three sections of the screen to the same 16 colors in the DOS version. You can add selection screens where the end-user can select certain options to control the installation.   Custom messages can be added into certain parts of the routine and README files can be displayed as part of the process.   It can even edit your Windows initialization file or assign the program to a workgroup with a certain icon. Probably the best features are that it will check for a minimum CPU and minimum disk space requirement so the program will not load onto a computer that doesn't meet the criteria.
       If you have a program that has files on several disks, and you would like to cut down on the number of distribution disks that are required, you can purchase the optional PC-Shrink utility program.   This full featured file compression program will compress one file on one disk or several files across many disks.   This will allow you to reduce the number of disks needed for distribution and easily incorporate the compressed files into the installation routine.   By just changing a few commands you can switch an installation routine for uncompressed files to one for compressed files.   If you have been using PKZip or LHA to compress your distribution disks you won't have to switch over.   It can incorporate either of these programs into the process, although there can be some confusion to end users when using PKZip's disk spanning ability, depending on how the installation is set up.   I would have to recommend using PC-Shrink for

use with PC-Install, the reason being that they were designed to work together.

PC-Install does lack in certain areas, however.   While it can add lines to the AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files, it can't check to see if these lines are already there. The same is true for adding a directory to the PATH statement.   While the program can check for a minimum CPU requirement, it can't detect Pentium processors.   It can display README files, but not print them.   Due to these facts, I wouldn't say that it is the perfect program to fill the need for an installation utility, especially with technology changing so rapidly.   The company does state that they plan to continue upgrading every year so hopefully they will fix these minor shortcomings by the next release.   While the program may not offer what a professional developer is looking for, I'd recommend the program to businesses for file distribution.

System requirements for PC-Install: 256K RAM
                                                       200K on Hard Drive
                                                       DOS 3.1 or Windows 3.1 or greater
                                              8088 CPU or greater

Distribution executable files are 57K and 77K for the DOS and Windows versions respectively.

The pricing is as follows: PC-Install for DOS - $99
                                              PC-Install for DOS with PC-Shrink - $149
                                              PC-Install for Windows with PC-Shrink - $179
                                              PC-Install Combo (DOS, Windows and PC-Shrink) - $249
                                              PC-Install five user pack - $799
                                              All include 5.25" and 3.5" disks.

20/20 Software is definitely on the rise in the computer world through partnerships with Microrim Software, Borland, and Microsoft; so I think their name will be heard quite a bit in the future.

For more information on PC-Install or other 20/20 Software products, write or call:

20/20 Software Inc.
8196 SW Hall Blvd.
Suite 200
Beaverton, OR 97005
(503) 520-0504
(503) 520-9118 Fax
Compuserve at 76662,3072

SideBar 1.0 for Microsoft Windows
review by
Thomas Kiblin

Quarterdecks' SideBar for Windows offers an object oriented desktop for Windows 3.10, Windows 3.11 and Windows for Workgroups 3.11 today, without the wait for Windows 4.0.

SideBar offers you the power to organize your desktop the way you work.   It allows you to place folders within folders and also adds the capability to place folders and application icons directly on the desktop, something Windows lacked from its inception.   [See Figure 1]

SideBar can replace your Program Manager shell and the Windows 3.11 Task Manager, or install as an application that still allows you to run Program Manager.   If you install it as a shell replacement, it displays a bar of icons along either side of your screen, hence the name SideBar [See Figure 2].   Inside this bar of icons, some familiar icons appear, such as the MS-DOS Prompt, Drive Listings, Print Manager, as well as some new icons.   Once nice feature is the Toolbar at the top of your windows, this allows you to enter DOS commands directly without the need to open the DOS Box.   Along the bottom of the window appears a status bar to display system resources.

SideBar offers a Shadow feature that lets you keep a duplication of program files, folders, application listings, data files, or folder icons in multiple locations, without taking up valuable disk space.   It simply points to the source file instead of keeping information with each copy. For instance you may want to keep a customer invoice form in several folders and on the desktop.   SideBar will update all the shadows automatically if you make a modification to any other shadow.

SideBar installs as either a shell replacement for Program Manager or as a stand alone application.   If you decide not to use SideBar as your shell, there is a feature within SideBar called Synchronize, this will ensure you that any changes such as new program groups or icons you add to Program Manager will be reflected in SideBar when it is activated.   Any changes are accurately reflected in both SideBar and Program Manager, hence is it a bi-directional synchronization.

If you like the TrashCan in the Mac world then you will like SideBars "Recycler Icon." This icon is a drag-and-drop object, meaning you can pick up files, folders, directories, or drives and simply drag and drop them on the Recycler icon and it will delete those objects.   It has a built in safety feature that can be setup to ask for confirmation before deletion.   In fact, most of the areas within SideBar allow you to enable or disable confirmation requests for most commands or functions.

SideBar is not any different from most other "One-Dot 0" releases, meaning it is not without some faults.   It ran fine with Windows 3.11, but when I tried to run it with Windows for Workgroups 3.11, some errors occurred.   First, if you have the Microsoft Network services enabled your "StartUp" group will not be active when Windows is started.   Also, when you re-size a window and then exit Windows, the next time you enter SideBar it does not remember the last size or location of the windows you had open in a prior session.   There are some reported problems with people using "Virtual Desktop" video drivers and such, and errors within the SYSTEM.INI including "load=" commands.   Quarterdecks technical support people know of these problems and a maintenance patch should be available very soon.

If you want an "Object Oriented" desktop today, without waiting for the next release of Windows or switching to another GUI such as OS/2, I would suggest taking a look at SideBar for Windows.   The street price is comparable to other Shareware Program Manger replacements. Quarterdeck Office Systems can be reached at   310-392-9851 and the list price for SideBar for Windows is $59.95.

Windows Magic
review by
Carl Dolmetsch

In the constant battle to make the PC increasingly "User Friendly" we have moved from command driven systems, to menu driven systems, to the graphical user interface.   Among the most popular of the graphical user interfaces is Windows.   Windows is not only easy to use, but is also a wonderful solution for performing more than one task at a time.   However, Windows still requires a set of steps to move from one application to another.   That's where Windows Magic from WinWear comes in.

Windows Magic is a set of utilities that operate in the Windows environment.   They include a resource monitoring utility (Resource-It), a disk monitoring utility (Disk-It), a print managing utility (Print-It), an applications manager (Get-It), and an exiting utility (Exit-It).   It also comes with a large icon library.   The fundamental premise behind Windows Magic is that Windows <u>CAN</u> be made easier.   It does this by overlaying Windows' Program Manager with a personally controlled set of options.   These options include the ability to minimize all of your program groups, yet still retain maximum control over running them.   You do this by moving your favorite applications into a new group called "Favorite Applications."   A toolbar allows you to set this group as an "always available" group.   It shows up as a "Radio" button bar.   Entry into any of these programs then requires only a single button click.

Once in any Windows-based application you can move to any other application directly without going back through the Program Manager by using the "Get-It" option.   This option is displayed as a grasping hand that is always visible in Windows applications.   Other utilities include the ability to monitor the status of your computer's resources.   This monitor is modifiable and has the capability of sending an alarm if your computer has exceeded any of the thresholds you set.   It also has a continuously available print capability.

Installation is through a standardized setup routine run from Windows.   Once the files are installed, Windows Magic allows you the option of replacing all of your group icons with custom icons. It even provides you with a selection of 3800 icons to choose from!   A pull down menu from the Windows Program Manager then allows you to customize the look and feel of your desktop.

From reading the above, one might easily think that Windows Magic is the be-all to end-all Windows navigation and management solution.   Not necessarily.   It does take some getting used to, however.   I found that it added a needless layer of complexity to an already simple system.   Because it sits on top of Windows, it takes longer to fully load the system than Windows alone.   For those who manage their own displays, the results from Windows Magic take some getting used to (reorganization of groups and icons).   Also, because Windows Magic overrides your Program Manager, certain Windows functionality is lost.   I found it very disconcerting that Windows Screen-Saver does not work when Resource-It is turned on.   Also, if you have more than one printer connected such as a Fax-Modem, changing from the default to secondary printers leads to changes in the Print-It setup which then carry through to your next session.   At one time I received a "driver not found" message when I tried to change printers.   This was a message that I have never received before and have to conclude that it was initiated by Windows Magic.   The on-line help for Windows Magic doesn't offer the extensive help found in other Program Manager replacements.   For some of the more complex changes you'll

need to refer to the User Manual.

Requirements: 500k disk space for programs
                       3.5 MB disk space for icon library

Price: $49.95 until August, $89.95 thereafter.

WinWear
14150 NE 20th St., Suite 346
Bellevue, WA, 98007
(206) 635-0856

CA Super Project
review by
Timothy Cook

If you are employed as a manager or are self employed then you use some method of project management.   Your method may vary from the simple "keep a list in my head" routine to complex   schedules and graphs, either hand-written or maintained on a computer.   My most often used method has been the pen and notepad scheduler.   With this one I would take a note pad, make a list of things to do and a list of items needed to complete the project.   When an item needed to be added in the middle of the list, I would just write very small and make it fit.   If I needed to remove an entry, the logical thing to do was scratch it out with ten or fifteen strokes of the pen.   Eventually even the small projects turned into a pile of notes with barely discernible tasks.   Not a very good image for a guy that makes his living with computers!

The opportunity to review *CA-SuperProject 3.0* was quite appropriate (has the editor been talking to my wife?).   Before going into details about the package I'm going to say, "You need this software!"

Inside the box you will find a total of six 3.5" high density diskettes in two separate envelopes containing *CA-SuperProject 3.0*.   There are four books comprising the *CA-SuperProject 3.0* documentation.   They are titled: "Getting Started", "User Guide", "Reference Guide" and "Network Activator".   Also in the box is a copy of the CA-Realizer "Programming Guide".   A stripped down copy of CA-Realizer is included with *CA-SuperProject 3.0* as a "macro" language.   CA-Realizer is similar to Visual Basic in use and application.   As an added surprise is a copy of *Time$heet Professional* by TIMESLIPS CORP. included in the package.   Bi-directional data exchange with *CA-SuperProject 3.0* is built into *Time$heet Professional.*

The documentation is perfect bound and well laid out.   Installation was easily accomplished by following the simple instructions in the Getting Started book.   Also in this volume, you will find definitions and use instructions for the menus and tool bar icons.   Even if you have never had formal project management experience you will find the User Guide easy to follow.   The User Guide starts the new user with preplanning concepts before you even touch the keyboard.   It then covers how to build your schedule using the basic features.   After developing your plan the User Guide explains maintaining your schedule during the project using more advanced features of the program.

The two-inch thick Reference Guide describes in detail all commands and functions of the program.   There are sufficient screen shots and examples throughout as well as several shaded boxes containing usage tips.

On-line help is standard Windows style with the addition of a selection for Tutorial.   The tutorial is a must use option no matter what your level of experience is with project management software.   The tutorial is primarily self running with stop points built in to give you a chance to acknowledge each step.

I found the example projects very helpful in showing off the program's capabilities.   The Task Outline is the view used for most of your work while building and maintaining your project schedule.   It provides a quick view of all task and resource information as it applies to the project.   Report generation is more than adequate, with several customizing options.

Building my own project schedule from scratch was quite painless.   The first step is to establish time slots available to perform the work.   This is done using the Project Calendar.

Next enter the tasks that need to be accomplished.   I found that you can brainstorm at this point because the flexibility of CA-SuperProject allows you to move tasks by using the promote and demote functions to re-arrange the order in which they occur.   After entering the tasks, you'll need people to do the work, possibly rooms to work or meet in, tools and supplies to use during the project.   These are all entered as resources.   Once the resources are designed, assign each task a resource.   You have now constructed a project schedule.

What I have covered up to this point is a very small sample of the capabilities of **CA-SuperProject 3.0.** It is very versatile in design and allows for several user defined data fields and preference settings.   If you're looking for a comprehensive project management program, for the most common needs, this is the one to choose.   One user relayed to me that it was an excellent package.   He would not have used it for the nuclear reactor project he worked on, but on smaller projects it has been   very capable.

Suggested retail price is $649.00 for the package that includes the Windows and O/S2 versions.   Recent Street Price (RSP) is less than $150.00.   On my scale of good deals it's a 10.

Computer Associates
(516) 342-5224

ExpenseIt!
review by
Lenis Hazlett

ExpenseIt!, recently released by On The Go Software, is an easy to use utility program designed specifically for tracking business travel expenses and producing expense reports.   The program goes beyond simply listing and summarizing expenses by category.   Expenses may also be matched to a specific project, client, or purpose.   These features make the program versatile enough to be used by both corporate and self-employed travelers.   Other useful features include: foreign currency conversion capability, mileage expense tracking and expense reimbursement and billing capabilities.

The program comes with eight pre-defined expense categories that meet the IRS' expense reporting guidelines.   Users may modify these and add up to 16 more categories.   Categories may also be linked to corporate general ledger account numbers.

To initially set up the program, users define expense and payment categories.   If desired, project names, client lists, and even travel destinations may also be pre-defined.   Data entry is straightforward and typing is minimized by the use of pop-up menus containing the pre-defined categories and lists.   Receipts may be entered in any order and are then organized by ExpenseIt! according to the user's preferences.

This program has a variety of report options both for submitting expense reports and for tracking expenses and reimbursement.   The program comes with eight portfolio or landscape pre-formatted expense reports that should meet most users' needs.   For an additional fee, On The Go will develop a template matching a company expense report, or users can purchase ExpenseIt! For Windows Report Writer and develop their own template.

Reports to track expenses include a billing feature that allows expenses to be summarized by client.   An itinerary feature allows expenses to be reported by business trip.   Expenses can also be reported by year, quarter or month.

A weakness of the program is in the handling of cash advances and reimbursements. While expenses may be associated with clients and projects, cash advances and reimbursements are associated only with the time period of the trip through the itinerary feature.   Users expecting reimbursement from more than one source may find this irritating.   Another area of weakness is in the documentation which tends to be scanty.

Overall, business travelers will find ExpenseIt! a useful, easy to use, and best of all relatively inexpensive program.   Don't leave home without it!

 System Requirements: IBM compatible computer
                    Windows 3.1
                    4MB RAM
                    Hard drive

On The Go Software
4350 La Jolla Village Drive
Suite 300
San Diego, CA 92122
Phone: 619-546-4340

Fax: 619-546-0430

Suggested retail price is $129.99.

Time Planner Deluxe 2.0
review by
Lisa Ramaglia

Time Planner Deluxe is a smart way for the small business owner to manage time. Time Planner keeps track of multiple projects for various clients, keeps track of the hours spent on a project, and at which rate of pay. It will also keep account of your employees' schedules and to which projects they have been assigned. Time Planner will schedule meetings so they do not conflict. Then, it will print out a report that summarizes this information.

Let's say for instance, you run a construction company. With Time Planner, through the use of notes and folders, you can schedule meetings with potential customers to discuss possible projects. Notes are put into a folder, including job description, hours/days to complete the project, hourly/daily rate of pay, which employees will work on the job, and what their jobs will entail. With this information, you can create a schedule on the calendar, review time and cost information in the form of a report or chart, and see whether or not the project conflicts with other projects on the timeline.

The program is formatted for use in Windows' easy click-button style. A mouse is definitely useful, and recommended. When you start up the program, you see a full screen with all the options shown in a large window. Choices for viewing files are in picture buttons at the top of the window. A click can change the format. All information for a client may be entered into the phone list, including separate work and home addresses. Does your client have a modem? A simple click and you're on your way to accessing your client without leaving the program.

To begin planning your time, you need to create a folder. Then make your notes using the note feature. There are easy to use note templates to help you create notes. You might have a note for a meeting you don't want to miss. Do you have a certain employee you want on the job? Write a note to schedule him in. Notes may be used to describe the project's features, the hourly rate, and when the job will begin. To see how your job is progressing, select the Browse feature. Here, you can see all of your notes and folders, and may assign various notes to different folders. This feature comes in handy when organizing projects.

Do you need to know if Jake is available to plan this new job? Switch to Calendar, select the day you want the job to start, and see if Jake is listed there for another job. If he is, reschedule the new job for another day, or schedule someone else for the existing job.

When scheduling a meeting, use Calendar to see if all employees have that time free. With this feature, appointments can be seen at a glance for the day, week, or month. Calendar also has all major holidays taken into consideration. If you have special office holidays, add them to the list of holidays. Calendar assumes that your business hours are Monday through Friday, 9 to 5, but this can be changed to meet your business needs. With Calendar, events can be recorded as they happen. This feature is perfect for consultants who need to keep track of every minute.

You've scheduled a job to start tomorrow and run for three weeks. To see if this interferes with a current job, select the Timeline feature and see if any of the blocks overlap. Timeline displays horizontal bar graphs, grouped by folder assignments. Conflicting assignments will be noticeable at a glance.

Do you need to know how a job is progressing? When it was finished? How long it

took?   How much money the job paid?   Select the Report feature.   It provides all that information in spreadsheet form.   You can show all folders at once, and have it calculate the revenue for several projects, say for the month of July.   Does your accountant need this information?   Print him out the report.   You'll show him your hours, rate, who worked on the project, and any other pertinent information that might be included in the report.

The graph feature can show how hours spent measure up to revenue collected.   It will create vertical graphs comparing the two, either for the week or for the duration of the project. These graphs can be printed as long as your printer is supported by Windows and will print graphics.

I found this program easy to use.   Starting up the sample and working through the tutorial in the manual takes away the overwhelming feeling of confusion you might get with the numerous features in this program.   If you have a business that could use these features and need a way to keep track of your time, I highly recommend this program.   The package states that this program was selected for use by the US Air Force, and over 70,000 copies have been purchased.   It installs simply, and provides just about every time-management tool you could hope for. Give it a try!

Minimum Requirements: 386SX or better
VGA or better
4MB RAM
2MB free hard disk space
Windows 3.1
Mouse

H. M. Hinsch & Co., Inc.   *Software Development*
20H Andover Circle
Princeton NJ 08540
(609)683-9494
(609)683-9486

For Orders call (800)952-3530
Call for current price.

Contact: George Broussard
CIS: 71321,2743
America Online: Apogee1
Internet: 71321.2743@compuserve.com

Announcing 3D Realms Entertainment
New Apogee division dedicated to development of 3D games

Garland, TX -- August 27, 1994 -- 3D Realms Entertainment, a new division of Apogee Software, Ltd., is focused exclusively on creating the best 3D games for the PC.   "By just focusing on 3D games," says George Broussard, head of 3D Realms, "we'll be able push the technology as far as it can possibly go on the PC, thus providing our customers with the best 3D play experiences achievable."

Currently, 3D Realms has four exciting, next-generation 3D games under development.   States Broussard, "3D games are an exploding market, and it's not going to diminish any time soon. We see 3D games as the future of gaming since they best represent how we live in life--we don't live in a 2D world, we live in a 3D reality.   It's about time a company commits to specializing in this hot market, without being distracted by other game styles."

3D Realms is committed to releasing innovative, cutting-edge 3D games that totally plunge players into a realistic environment, be it a hostile action game, a simulation, a sports game or an adventure/exploration   game.   Most games rarely live up to their hype.   We believe the features and inventiveness of our games will speak for themselves.

"Our current 3D development 'engine', Build, is tailor built for fast action and realistic gameplay, plus it pushes the envelope of 3D gaming technology further than we've seen it," states Broussard.   "It's natural to compare it to Id Software's superb DOOM engine, except it has many new advancements, like looking up and down, moving transport vehicles, more realistic lighting, translucent images, rooms above rooms, spiral staircases, and other more technical improvements. The game characters can also jump, duck, crawl, climb
ladders, fly, or anything else you can imagine."

All of the games support modem play as well as IPX network play.

Here's a brief description of the current 3D Realms games in development:

RUINS: RETURN OF THE GODS   As an enterprising archaeologist, you have dug up more than you can handle! You've just discovered an alien mothership buried deep beneath a recent Egyptian excavation.   This vessel belongs to not-so-friendly aliens who built the ancient pyramids in order to produce a mind-controlling energy field over the Earth.   After a millennium, the aliens have returned to finish their dark work by enslaving the people of the world.   Only you know their sinister plot!   Battle the Anubis and other Egyptian mythological

monsters, along with awesome alien enemies, as you solve puzzles and escape traps in your quest to annihilate the alien invaders.

SHADOW WARRIOR   As a highly trained Ninja warrior, you're on a mission to stop a powerful and evil mystical spirit that has been released after a thousand years' imprisonment under Mt. Fuji.   You'll cast magical energies and use an array of weapons, including throwing stars and a crossbow, as you battle a combative cult of obsessed assassins and murderers. Controlled by the returning spirit, this hostile horde seeks to overthrow first Japan, and then the world.   Only you have the power to give them the final "Sayonara, baby!" Overcome trained martial arts opponents, elude traps, defeat magical enemies, and conquer the supernatural as you set out to save mankind in this action-packed mystical adventure.

DUKE NUKEM 3D -- The future is here and you may be the only one fierce enough to face it! The World Government has lowered a gigantic dome around Los Angeles, which has become a mecca for criminals.   Evil but ingenious scientists and bosses have activated the nuclear plants and are building the mother of all bombs to obliterate Earth in one last gesture!   As the unflappable Duke Nukem, you are assigned the job of entering the dome through a secret passage and stopping the plan in its tracks.   Done Duke's way, this means kill first then ask questions.   This non-stop action/survival saga unfolds on a space station orbiting Earth where you must knock out a force field surrounding the planet.   With astounding futuristic weapons, you'll enter a battleground of phenomenal action to fry the foes before they undo the world.

BLOOD -- Welcome to the nightmare!   Horror rears its many heads in this eerie spine-tingling action adventure. Suddenly, all of the subconscious and conscious evil in humankind's minds has spawned macabre manifestations all over the planet.   As a member of a secret group that has been awaiting this event, you journey to the heart of danger where the outbreaks of evil have been most reported.   You arrive at a mysterious castle, the first of several strongholds where gruesome monsters and otherworldly creations are   preparing to do unspeakable horrors to the people of Earth. You must use every weapon at your disposal, including a flame-thrower, to stop the erupting evil.   Without backup help available, you realize it's just you   against them!

All four games are due out in 1995.   Each one will have a shareware version available for free through bulletin boards (i.e. Software Creations BBS) and online services (i.e. CompuServe and America Online).   Each shareware version--approximately one third of the full game--will advertise the complete game,
which is sold directly by 3D Realms.   (The industry known "Apogee Model" shareware marketing system.)   FormGen Corporation has the worldwide exclusive license to release each game into the retail channel at the same time the shareware versions of each game are released by 3D Realms.

"We will continue to develop state-of-the-art 3D game engines," Broussard said.   "Already under development is our PolyTex engine, due to be ready in early 1995. It will let us design games that are perfectly realistic using a true 3D environment.   Imagine yourself inside a space station without gravity and using magnetic boots to walk on any surface at any orientation, climb ladders to rooms above rooms and fly into space through an airlock.   That's the kind of realistic game environment that will be possible with the Polytex engine."

3D Realms Entertainment--more than a just a new company, it's a new outlook on game development.   We are focused on creating the next wave of realistic, engrossing gaming experiences.   Games that *are* real.

Additional notes:

3D Realms will release each game using the "Apogee Model", meaning the first   third of each game will be available freely as shareware.   The full version of each game can be ordered directly from 3D Realms.   Additionally, the version of each game will be available through retail channels, too.   FormGen Corporation (publisher of SPEAR OF DESTINY) will handle the retail distribution of all four 3D Realms titles.

The inhouse level editor and development tools will be made available, so users can use these highly advanced tools to develop their own levels and art.

RISE OF THE TRIAD, an Apogee release coming by November, is not being released under the 3D Realms label.

Finding CyberNews . . . .

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-Send a message to Roger Klein, Publisher/Production, asking for a copy of our Writer's Guidelines. Guess what? They are straight forward! You can contact Roger at roger.klein@supportu.com or on the RIME CyberNews conference.
-Upload a copy of CyberNews to your favorite BBS. Ok, this isn't required, but we'd appreciate it!

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Oh, if you are on CompuServe, send Roger the message at INTERNET: roger.klein@supportu.com.

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