

## FROM THE MODEMNEWS STAFF

Dear Readers,

So there we had it! 1991. What a year. We won a war but lost the peace, and while all the hoopla was made about ending the career of one Saddam Hussein, and nearly 50 billion dollars was spent attempting to do just that, Saddam remains employed while the unemployment lines in this country just grow longer and longer. Europe is united and the Soviet Union is no longer. The Berlin Wall has come down and the stock market went through the roof! The Israelis have finally met the Palestinians on equal terms, and the first signs of the ending of Apartheid are slowly coming around in South Africa.

The Chinese get Most Favored Nation status even though the death count at Tiananmin is still being tallied, and Kuwait is safe again for dictatorship. We amaze in the revelation of HUGE arms sales to Iran, and a rethinking of the Warren Commission report; the removal of American troops from Subic Bay, and the removal of Democracy from Peru.

A year where the State of New Mexico added the words "USA" to their license plates because so many Americans thought it was part of Mexico, and a trade agreement with Old Mexico that might finally blur the borders a bit.

Robert Maxwell. Not!

1991 was a year in which the computer industry also went through some harrowing changes. How many software companies have been "swallowed" up by others. Remember Ashton-Tate? The OS war between Microsoft, IBM and Digital Research, not to forget Sun Microsystems, NEXT and Taligent (who?).

IBM and Apple Corp. are involved in a mutual project. Who woulda thought? Really. IBM has broken itself into baby IBM's and are now selling PC's under a different name in Southeast Asia.

Norton Desktop for Windows (a better Windows), WordPerfect for Windows, this for windows, that for windows. Hey wait! What's with all this Windows stuff? A year in which the bubble was blown out of Microsoft in the courtroom, and in the revelation that they have moved 7 million copies of

Windows (most through VAR's at near cost) while there are an estimated 100 million PC's in the world.

A year that saw Intel loose a court battle, and Lotus decide to trash it's DOS 1-2-3 then change their minds again. The 50 MHz 486 chip, the 100MHz 486 Chip and the coming 586 Chip. Hmmm.

What will 1992 bring?

In the computer industry look for Windows v3.1 due in April, and Windows NT shortly after (Which one should I buy? GeoWorks!), and a new Norton Desktop for Windows to make Win 3.1 a better windows (I guess some things just never change.

Look for a strong OS\2 from IBM, and NeXtStep on a 486 platform (Yay!)

Look for nothing from Taligent except press releases (we'll keep you posted).

Look for a Postscript laser printer for under 1000 dollars.

Look for a Presidential Election! (OOPS!)

We'd like to leave you with some of our favorite quotes from 1991.

"It is appropriate....that the very first article of the Bill of Rights guarantees Americans' freedom to worship, to assemble, to speak and to publish. Today, respect for the founders' ideals of freedom of conscience still drives us as we seek to restore the freedom of voluntary prayer in the public schools."

George Bush December 16th, 1991 Montpelier, VT

(ed's note...I guess he missed the part about separation of church and state)

"If I ruled the world, It would always be cool as autumn, Every day would be payday. If I ruled the world, I wouldn't have AIDs, I would give everybody an extra day of life, So those who had missed out on something could recapture it. What a wonderful dream I had."

Anonymous

"Saddam Hussein still has a job, do you?"

Poster on Third Avenue in New York City.

So, have a great New Year! And remember, you can't bitch if you don't vote. Register! Participate! Vote!

The Staff •

## COMMENTS FROM OUR READERS

Techno-Jargon and Our Sanity!

Douglas J. Lawrence  
The Research Center BBS  
December 07, 1991

When I bought the new Wildcat 3.01 BBS program it came with two manuals. One of these was for the program itself, the other for the PRO! series utilities which is an optional accessory package to help one manage the BBS system better.

Having installed the BBS system, I turned to the manual for the accessory package, so I could install a batch of files en masse. In so doing I read the beginning of a chapter in the manual that went something like this: " The match choice allows you to set a match filter for performing all other message functions.....When match is selected to change the selection filter, a message match screen is displayed....

Well this went on and on. After reading it several times, I threw my hands up in the air in disgust, and threw the manual in the basket - where it properly belongs. Now I am a fairly intelligent person I think, so I was somewhat taken aback, that the writers of this gobbledygook could not for some reason bring themselves to tell me what a "Match Filter" was, or what a "selection filter" was either.

I sometimes wonder if the writers of this garbage got their English Degree at the Acme College of Plumbing & Heating ! I hold a couple of literary degrees, and it would seem to me that a writer when writing a technical piece could offer an explanation by way of a glossary, when they are introducing new phraseology to our language!

I read medical journals, car engine manuals, textbooks on Embalming & Mortuary Science and a whole host of other technical stuff. But only it seems in the Computer Arena, are we confronted with this plethora of nonsensical euphemistic, assinine lingo that no one can fathom, even if he or she holds a

Doctorate in Computer Science.

Now like most sane and rather well-educated persons, I was brought up to read the instructions that came with a new or unfamiliar product that I was about to use, BEFORE I used it, so I did not do something stupid or dangerous, or to avoid a potentially hazardous situation.

Computers & software are expensive and oftentimes "buggy". It is the nature of the beast. But really, must we as endusers of a product that we might have spent several hundred or thousands of dollars for put up with this "Techno-jargon" ? Isn't it about time that we as end users let the manufacturers and writers of computer oriented products know that we don't want to pay for this type of crap anymore ? Can we not threaten to boycott their products if they do not start to write manuals and docs that the average end-user can understand ? It is worse than reading a law book ! (try it sometime)

Lets put an end to euphemistic gobbledegook, that wastes paper, ink and attempts to un-do our precarious sanity! Why don't we collectively on a certain day all send our manuals back to the companies that supplied them with our products. Maybe after being buried under several hundred tons of this stuff, they would get the idea - and we would see an end to this sort of thing.

In the meantime I shall now turn to my music writing program and compose a small piece with a series of hemidemisemiquavers to express fitfully my displeasure. •