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The Many Faces of Santa ...A Xmas Greeting

Santa's Holiday Greetings
Copyright 1995 by Derek Buchler

Santa is a System Administrator:

I was musing on similarities between Santa Claus and system administrators. Consider:

- 1. Santa is bearded, corpulent, and dresses funny.**
- 2. When you ask Santa for something, the odds of receiving what you wanted are infinitesimal.**
- 3. Santa seldom answers your mail.**
- 4. When you ask Santa where he gets all the stuff he's got, he says, "Elves make it for me."**
- 5. Santa doesn't care about your deadlines.**
- 6. Your parents ascribed supernatural powers to Santa, but did all the work themselves.**
- 7. Nobody knows who Santa has to answer to for his actions.**
- 8. Santa laughs entirely too much.**

9. Santa thinks nothing of breaking into your \$HOME.

10. Only a lunatic says bad things about Santa in his presence.

Buchler goes on to assert:

Seasons Greetings!

The recent announcement that Donner and Blitzen have elected to take the early reindeer retirement package has triggered a good deal of concern about whether they will be replaced, and about other restructuring decisions at the North Pole.

Streamlining was appropriate in view of the reality that the North Pole no longer dominates the season's gift distribution business. Home shopping channels and mail order catalogues have diminished Santa's market share and he could not sit idly by and permit further erosion of the profit picture.

The reindeer downsizing was made possible through the purchase of a late model Japanese sled for the CEO's annual trip. Improved productivity from Dasher and Dancer, who summered at the Harvard Business School, is anticipated and should take up the slack with no discernible loss of service. Reduction in reindeer will also lessen air-borne environmental emissions for which the North Pole has been cited and received unfavorable press.

I am pleased to inform you and yours that Rudolph's role will not be disturbed. Tradition still counts for something at the North Pole.

Management denies, in the strongest possible language, the earlier leak that Rudolph's nose got that way not from the cold, but from substance abuse. Calling Rudolph *a lush who was into the sauce and never did pull his share of the load* was an unfortunate comment, made by one of Santa's helpers and taken out of context at a time of year when he is known to be under executive stress.

As a further restructuring, today's global challenges require the North Pole to continue to look for better, more competitive steps. Effective immediately, the following economy measures are to take place in the "Twelve Days of Christmas" subsidiary:

The partridge will be retained, but the pear tree never turned out to be the cash crop forecasted. It will be replaced by a plastic hanging plant, providing considerable savings in maintenance.

The two turtle doves represent a redundancy that is simply not cost effective. In addition, their romance during working hours could not be condoned. The positions are therefore eliminated.

[The three French hens will remain intact. After all, everyone loves the French.]

The four calling birds were replaced by an automated voice mail system, with a call waiting option. An analysis is underway to determine who the birds have been calling, how often and how long they talked.

The five golden rings have been put on hold by the Board of Directors. Maintaining a portfolio based on one commodity could have negative

implications for institutional investors. Diversification into other precious metals as well as a mix of T-Bills and high technology stocks appear to be in order.

The six geese-a-laying constitutes a luxury which can no longer be afforded. It has long been felt that the production rate of one egg per goose per day is an example of the decline in productivity. Three geese will be let go, and an upgrading in the selection procedure by personnel will assure management that from now on every goose it gets will be a good one.

The seven swans-a-swimming is obviously a number chosen in better times. The function is primarily decorative. Mechanical swans are on order. The current swans will be retrained to learn some new strokes and therefore enhance their outplacement.

As you know, the eight maids-a-milking concept has been under heavy scrutiny by the EEOC. A male/female balance in the workforce is being sought. The more militant maids consider this a dead-end job with no upward mobility. Automation of the process may permit the maids to try a-mending, a-mentoring or a-mulching.

Nine ladies dancing has always been an odd number. This function will be phased out as these individuals grow older and can no longer do the steps.

Ten Lords-a-leaping is overkill. The high cost of Lords plus the expense of international air travel prompted the Compensation Committee to suggest replacing this group with ten out-of-work congressmen. While leaping ability may be somewhat sacrificed, the savings are significant because we expect an oversupply of unemployed congressmen this year.

Eleven pipers piping and twelve drummers drumming is a simple case of the band getting too big. A substitution with a string quartet, a cutback on new music and no uniforms will produce savings which will drop right down to the bottom line.

We can expect a substantial reduction in assorted people, fowl, animals and other expenses. Though incomplete, studies indicate that stretching deliveries over twelve days is inefficient. If we can drop ship in one day, service levels will be improved.

Regarding the lawsuit filed by the attorney's association seeking expansion to include the legal profession *thirteen lawyers-a-suing* action is pending.

Lastly, it is not beyond consideration that deeper cuts may be necessary in the future to stay competitive. Should that happen, the Board will request management to scrutinize the Snow White Division to see if seven dwarfs is the right number.

Derek Buchler is a systems administrator. To our mind, a strange but compelling marriage of computer knowledge, creativity, and chutzpah. This is Derek's second holiday season with WindoWatch.

Word vs. Word Pro

WordProcessing and the Suites **Copyright 1995 by Frank McGowan**

About a month ago, I broke down and purchased the Lotus SmartSuite - the Lotus answer to Microsoft Office Professional. While I haven't given all its components a real workout yet, I have had a chance to play with Word Pro. What follows are my impressions of the software while keeping in mind that I am an admitted Word bigot. This fact has caused a few teeny moments of domestic discord, since Sue, my wife, is a devotee of WordPerfect.

Installation

This process should be done just as Lotus says to do it: Because it's always worked before, I attempted my usual ploy of inserting the diskette, opening File Manager, then double-clicking the installation executable file. I had installed about thirty disks, losing count after twenty-five, when I got an error message telling me that a certain DLL file wasn't available because it was already in use by another task. The only other task running was File Manager, so...

I got to play disk jockey all over again, this time with a few muttered imprecations, but the installation went swimmingly thereafter. With the SmartSuite toolbar onscreen, I opted to take Word Pro out for a spin. My initial misgivings aside (the screen looked odd to my Word-oriented eyes), I must say I'm impressed. This word processor has features similar to those of Word for Windows (no big surprise), and was a bit easier to use in one or two instances and a little quirky in one or two others.

The Word Pro screen, as I said, is significantly different from Word's, and a little disconcerting at first, even though I quickly adjusted to it. For one thing, there are fewer menu choices on the menu bar, which means that each menu contains more features. Once you've gotten used to Word's menu bar, Word Pro's looks almost barren. This means that it is not possible to guess what each menu contains, a fault shared with Word, but exacerbated by having fewer categories. Why, for instance, is User Setup found in the File menu? And why doesn't the manual point me there to clarify the mysteries of the Undo feature? But I digress! More on the topic of documentation below, for those of you who can't wait for my brilliant insights and want to skip ahead.

Features

As for features, I looked at general ease of text creation and modification, Spelling, Grammar, AutoCorrect (SmartCorrect), Help, and Mail Merge.

Text Creation and Modification

There's no perceptible difference between Word Pro and Word for Windows in the area of creating a text file. It's very straightforward. Worders will experience no discomfort here. Things change a bit when you get to editing, however.

For one thing, triple-clicking on a word doesn't select the paragraph in Word Pro. It simply toggles off the word's selection. To select a paragraph, you open the Text menu, then Select, then specify the unit of your choice. As someone who's gotten spoiled by Word, this seems very cumbersome. Nor does there seem to be a *line select* capability or, for that matter, any selection area in the left margin at all. But I do like the fact that the current text selection is extended when you hold down Shift and click the mouse button.

Still another difference, the Case Change feature in Word (Shift-F3) produces something quite different in Word Pro - you change fonts instead. The unanticipated change from Times New Roman to Algerian was quite a surprise!

However the Markup Edits feature is really neat! This feature changes the color of the onscreen font to indicate changes you have made to a file making it easier for co-workers to see your proposed revisions when they get the file to work on. You can do this in Word, but it means selecting a color from the color palette, and then using that color when you type in the new text.

In fact, Word Pro is much more geared to the work team concept than the standalone worker-bee paradigm; much more so than Word. That would appear to be the major differentiating factor between them.

Spell Checking

I really like one particular feature of Word Pro's spell program: It shows you on screen, in the file, which word(s) it suspects of being misspelled, so you can decide in advance whether to skip over them, or make the correction before the flag goes up. There are not many differences between them except this one.

Grammar Checker

The grammar programs of Word and Word Pro are also quite alike. Both nag you about things like passive construction and highlight words you might have mistakenly used in place of similar-sounding or appearing words. Doesn't this come under the rubric of *diction*? All in all, this is probably a good thing. One I'd suggest is that *loose* be confirmed, since it's so often used when *lose* is the proper choice. Sue, my beautiful and brilliant wife would add *everyday*; as an adjective, or a fine *everyday occurrence*, but not in something like *We work hard everyday*. [sic]

If you'll pardon a personal anecdote, I was reminded of an announcement by a major computer manufacturer a few years back, proudly proclaiming their latest gift to writers everywhere: the Grammer [sic] Checker. Oh, well...Word Pro's Grammar checker also produces the same measurements of *readability*, letting you know whether someone needs to be a rocket scientist to understand your prose, or whether it's intelligible to little Johnny, the third-grade class clown. I have doubts about the validity of such measuring devices, probably because my writing is invariably deemed too advanced. I have more faith in my readers than I have in Rudolph Flesch, however.

Automatic Correction

Word Pro's answer to AutoCorrect is called, what else, SmartCorrect. It seems to have a more extensive set of corrections already built in than does AutoCorrect. One of my pet peeves - *alot* in place of *a lot* is one that chafes me, for example. I was also amused to see that the word *potatoe* will be replaced automatically by *potato*.

I must carp at a few inclusions, as well as some exclusions, however. For one, the version of *accommodate* they replace is *acomodate*. It's been my experience that most people misspell this as *accomodate*. For another, the misspelling *accidental* is included, but not the much more common *accidently*. And why is *rasberry* [sic] included? Is this a word that crops up often in word processing jobs?

As for exclusions, I'd add *kernal* (kernel), which shows up all over computer writing, especially when the topic is UNIX. Also, how about some of the so-called stumbers, as long as we're being whimsical, like *moccasin*, *exhilarate*, and *mayonnaise*?

Help

I must confess that I'm not wild about Word Pro's Help system. Bringing me to a screen full of *not-intuitively-obvious* icons and telling

me to select the one that will most likely lead me to the subject is not terribly helpful. I'm still tied to text, I guess. Once I got past the icons, however, things smoothed out nicely, and I was able to find what I was looking for without undue difficulty.

Mail Merge

Maybe it's because I've learned two different versions of this feature in Word v2.0 and v6.0, but when I got to Word Pro's, it seemed like an utter snap. I mean, as in *no sweat, no strain*. I'm not sure whether it would seem that easy to the uninitiated, but I have to give them high marks from what I saw of it. For once, this process really seemed obvious and simple. This is quite different from just saying it IS obvious and simple, which leads to an even higher level of frustration when the user can't seem to *get it*.

User Manual

Maybe we need a new term for user manuals, like *off-line documentation*? Whatever. My first impression of the user guide titled EXPLORING WORD PRO; what is this, a safari? It is small enough to be unintimidating, but big enough to have the information you need. Well, maybe...

As I discovered as I explored the topic of *Undo*, it ain't necessarily so. I just wanted to compare Word Pro's Undo with Word's. Naively, I went to the index, which pointed me to Online Help, which I took to refer to the topic of Online Help described in the book. Sadly, I was misled: what the index was pointing to was the Online Help files themselves which I finally figured out after a fruitless search of the manual. I can almost hear the person who created the index screaming that the asterisk would have led me to the note telling me about this, but my response is "I don't do asterisks; spell it out for me right there." Altogether, a typical lazy reader!

If I understand what I was able to uncover about Undo, there is a virtually unlimited level of undo's you can perform with Word Pro while Word is limited to a measly 100. But I'm just surmising, since I was unable to locate anything specific. I confess to giving up trying after a few minutes because I have better and more interesting things to do.

And, apropos of nothing except preserving my mother tongue: Who made up the term *versioning*? Why does he/she still have a job in documentation? I suspect this was crammed down the writers' throats by an overbearing engineering honcho.

Summary

What I have seen so far leads me to conclude that Word Pro is an excellent product, especially for those in a work group situation where file sharing is of paramount importance. For lone wolf types, my preference is still Word for Windows, however. Just an opinion!

Frank McGowan is a teacher, a science writer and computer consultant and is a regular *Windo Watch* contributor. This is the first in a series of articles evaluating this pair of very popular suites.

What Will You Do On the Internet?

Copyright 1995 by Kyle Freeman

It is a given that you've got to be connected to the Internet! After all the advertising you've seen calculated to make you feel like a troglodyte just 'cause you aren't wired for the global party everyone else is having, you have to sign up. You must, if for no other reason than to keep your self-respect. Once you're a proud member of the brotherhood of hip souls who know where the action in the 21st century is going to be, what will you actually do on the Internet? Well, perhaps not as much as first imagined. Here's an account, for what it's worth, of what I do on the Net. I don't pretend to think my experience is typical because I don't think there is such a thing as a typical user. But I suspect the shape of my experience is common to many and may well preshadow your own.

First of all, unless you're reasonably lucky, you're more than likely going to struggle with setting up your connection. You have to worry about things like a TCP/IP stack, and winsock, and trumpet, and IP addresses, most of which will be completely new to you, even if you're an experienced computer user. Unless you get very good step-by-step instructions with your software, or as is more and more likely these days, your Internet provider sends you software already configured with its address, your ardor to get on the Net straightaway will run into that sphinx you've met elsewhere too many times in Computer Land that simply won't let you get past a certain sticking point until you answer what seems to you like riddles. If you want to understand all this stuff, by the way, you can read an excellent article in

WindoWatch Vol.1 No.2 by Harry Kriz. But then again you may be lucky enough to get past this step without any trouble.

When you finally get everything right, your new found fervor to get on with it, may be thwarted if you first set up your software under Windows3.1 and then upgraded to Win95. Some Internet providers, The Well is one, send you software that works fine in Windows3.1 but suddenly won't work at all under Win95. They have workarounds, but again it's something you'd never figure out by yourself without the multipage set of instructions they'll send you *after* you've pulled out most of your hair and called them for help. So before you sign up, ask if the provider's software runs under Win95. By now, providers are aware of the need to make their software compatible with Win95, so this particular hassle should soon, like old soldiers, just fade away. But save yourself some prolonged grief by checking to be sure.

I first got on the Internet with NetCom's NetCruiser, which I still use as my basic connection. NetCom provides all the basic Internet services in workable, though not state of the art, applets. It's easy to set up and requires no fiddling for Win95. The first thing I wanted to do was explore the World Wide Web. There are of course a zillion places to visit on the Web, but its very size makes it as exhausting as spending a day in the Louvre. And not every site is a masterpiece, either. I found that just touring around by following hypertext links can waste whole weeks of your time.

I went first to the White House home page (www.whitehouse.gov) to see lots of pictures of its various rooms, a full account of President Clinton's inauguration, sounds of the bells that rang across the country on that night, as well as the sound of Sox the Cat's meow. You can leave a message for the President, too, if you're so minded.

My brother wrote a note commending Bill on something or other and received a letter of thanks signed by the President's very own signature machine. Of course if you think of the President as Slick Willie, the nation's chief villain, you can write that, too. You'll also get a letter in response: from the IRS. Just kidding; Nixon's dead.

There are all sorts of places you'll want to visit before the novelty of the thing wears off. You can see a map of the Paris subway, enter a starting and a destination point, and be advised on the best route to take. (<http://wings.buffalo.edu>) I believe it is from that same site that you can view and download images of Paris, from the Eiffel Tower, of course, to moody scenes along the Seine, to L'Arc de Triomphe, and all sorts of street scenes. If you've ever been to Paris and loved the place, you might want some reminders of it on your desktop.





While still on the Web, let me mention two other sites that might interest someone who cares about art. At www.christusrex.org you can get a complete set of all the art in the Sistine Chapel. Not only can you get the Michelangelo ceiling panels, in groups and individual paintings, you can retrieve the Last Judgment on the back wall and all the tapestries on the side walls done by other artists. You can download more than three hundred images, with thumb nail sketches of each one so that you know what you're getting before you spend a lot of time

downloading the wrong picture.

You can also visit the Louvre, where you can download JPEG images of much of its art. There are several ways to get there: <http://sunsite.unc.edu/> is one; <http://mistral.enst.fr> and <http://www.emf.net> are two more. I don't know what use it serves to have a Botticelli painting in your computer, but I like having La Primavera in mine. If you ask do I really need such things, I'd say "No, of course not." But I'd also agree with the sentiments of King Lear: "Allow not nature more than nature needs, Man's life is cheap as beast's." So if you can find a use, the paintings are there just waiting to visit - a screen near you.



Last, many of you may know the work of the Limbourg Brothers, who painted a series of calendar illustrations in the 14th century known as Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry. *The image to the left is January.*

These can also be found on the home page of the WebMuseum, along with the scenes of Paris I mentioned above. They would make classy cover pages for newsletters that use calendars or great pictures to decorate notices of parties.

After spending lots of time pursuing such butterflies, I now use the Web only for specific tasks, mostly to get software upgrades from manufacturers' sites. Being a tourist, either in foreign

locales or on your computer screen, finally gets tiring and even boring. I predict that, like me, you'll find you'll use the World Wide Web only when you have a specific purpose.

Long before I got on the Internet, I used to monitor an Internet Usenet group from my local BBS, which carried a select number of such groups. This group, comp.archives.msos.announce, lists all the

shareware uploaded to two of the biggest shareware depositories, SimTel, which used to be part of the defense department, and Garbo, a site at the University of Wasa in Finland. Once on the Net, it's possible to use ftp to retrieve files from these sites. SimTel is at [ftp.coast.net](ftp://coast.net) but has many other mirror sites around the world, and garbo can be found at [garbo.uwasa.fi](ftp://garbo.uwasa.fi). Each has scores of directories of shareware files of all sorts, including, at least at SimTel, many Windows programs. SimTel, by the way, has a whole directory devoted to *Windo Watch*, where you can download all the back issues, the essential Acrobat viewer to read them, and a zipped file (calend12.zip) with *all* twelve of the calendar illustrations....much too large to publish here. Each site has an index file to help you can find what's available in their archives. Getting files is quicker using ftp than the Web simply because you don't have to wait for all the graphics to load on a home page.

If you're new to modeming, the chances are good that you'll be struck with Downloading Fever once you see all these programs and images you can get with a few keystrokes. Even if you're a BBS veteran and have already shaken off that delirium of grabbing every nifty looking program in sight, you may still fall prey to it for a while once you have a whole new quarry in view. But still, every fever runs its course, and once you've glutted your hard drive with more goodies than a greedy child on Halloween, you'll find, like I did, that you'll seldom spend much time downloading files, and then only when it's an important file you've read about somewhere else. I now spend my ftp time at either Microsoft's ftp site ([ftp.microsoft.com](ftp://microsoft.com)), getting McAfee's latest virus scanning programs ([ftp.mcafee.com](ftp://mcafee.com)), or getting program updates, such as Colorado's latest free upgrade for its Windows 95 tape backup program ([ftp.hp.com](ftp://hp.com)). Another Internet tool you'll get from a full provider is Telnet, which

lets you operate other computers as if you're in front of them. I amused myself with looking at the card catalogues of the Library of Congress and the Harvard On Line Library Services looking for specific books. Unless you really need to know what's been published, or expect to take a trip to either place to look at a rare book, chances are you won't use it much either. I know there are many other places that have Telnet sites, but have limited needs so rarely ever use them.

Of course the most popular feature on the Internet is e-mail. You can send messages across the country or the world, knowing they'll arrive in seconds. It may well be the thing you use most on the Internet. Of course even the joys of e-mail have been hyped to some degree. Your friends in Paris won't get your messages right away unless they dial up their provider within a few minutes of time from when you send it. You won't get theirs, either, without doing the same. Many BBSes provide Internet e-mail far less expensively than the \$20 a month you're likely to pay for your access. Still, it's certainly quicker than letters, easier than writing something on paper or trundling it off to the mail box.

Last, I suppose I should mention what may motivate some to get on the Net. You no doubt saw news stories about hearings in the Senate about all the pornography infesting the Internet. To hear them talk you would think you couldn't spend ten minutes online without being exposed to scenes of unimaginable depravity. Of course there are such scenes, but you really have to go looking for them to see anything remotely deviant. And if you do spend the time to download any of the stuff, what you end up with are pictures you see on a computer screen, not nearly as clear as photographs or video tapes, which is where most of them were scanned to start with. Like everything else on the Internet, it sounds more titillating to hear Senator Helms rail against

bestiality and lesbian nuns or whatever, than to actually see the often grainy images uploaded by some over active teenager.

You've had to notice a theme running through this account. You'll be excited when you first log on to this vast new venture, and you should be. It's undeniably exciting to reach across the world to hear the President greet you at your desktop, to send messages thousands of miles in milliseconds, or to meet people with similar interests. But like all novelties, the excitement wears off. You'll spend less time online, but you'll be equipped to do far more things much more quickly than you ever did them before. You'll become one of the citizens of cyberspace, cruising down the Information Superhighway. After a few joy rides, your modem will stay in the garage most of the time. But like your car, your modem will be a vehicle for freedom, ready to transport you across the world at a second's notice. You'll make friends, find jobs, get news, play games, and of course, feed your computer all the software it demands. It will become another of those life-changing technologies that change your life, like radio, telephone, TV, automobiles and jet travel once did. And like them you'll come to take it for granted as a fact of life.

Kyle Freeman is a regular contributor to WindoWatch. A former teacher, he now practices his computer craft in San Francisco as a consultant. I asked him to take us on a tour of the Internet and this visual feast is the result.



Rural Access to the Internet

Copyright 1995 by John M. Campbell

The big online service brag is that over 90% of the population is just a *local call away*! So - what about the rest of us? I live in a rural area, where CompuServe (CIS), America Online (AOL), Prodigy, Pipeline, etal. require a long distance call. The *WindoWatch* editor lives even further out in the boonies - about thirty miles from me. How do we rural folks, and more specifically business, teachers, parents and students access the urban riches offered by the major online services and the Internet?

The answer, for many of us, is an enterprise that has been making its way into smaller areas - the Local Internet Service Provider. These businesses are now springing up in the most unlikely places as the thirst for Internet access increases. Typically, ISPs are relatively small business operations having local servers and high-speed connections to a distant mainframe computer that, in turn, has a direct Internet connection. For example, my ISP uses a host MicroVAX mini-computer, connected to a Bell Atlantic 56K frame relay link to MountainNet Integrated Services, a commercial Internet provider for business and education located 70 miles away in Morgantown, WV.

What's a Deal and What's the Best Deal?

When there are several local ISPs in an area, it becomes important to examine the services each has to offer. Even when only a single ISP is within a local calling area, certain questions should be asked before

deciding whether to subscribe, since some services may be too limited to be worth the subscription fee. Important questions to ask before signing on are:

1. What services do I get for my money?

Most providers offer at least an email address and usually, limited storage space on their server for incoming mail. The provider should have a POP3 server for incoming mail, and a SMTP server for outgoing mail. Its a good idea to inquire whether the provider plans to allow each user storage space on their server for a personal Web page. If so, consider this a value-added service.

Of course, some sort of Internet connection is the primary attraction. This connection may take the form of SLIP, PPP, SHELL, or some combination of these. When available, a PPP connection is the most desirable, since it is usually the easiest to configure on one's computer. SHELL connections, once the rule, are to be avoided. With only a SHELL account, one is dumped at the UNIX prompt, and most Windows-based Internet software becomes unusable. It then becomes necessary to obtain, and learn to use, UNIX-style text-based utilities. This is very uncool for the average person because the language is completely unfriendly and becomes part of a struggle for the new user trying to learn online skills. There is a joke to the effect that the Berkeley campus at the University of California is best known for two exports, UNIX and LSD, and that this combination is not a coincidence.

An Internet provider should provide 28.8K modem lines - the more the better. Anything less than an 28.8 connection slows Web browsers to a crawl, and some of the newer technologies, such as the Cuseeme video conferencing scheme, won't work at all at lower modem speeds.

A sufficient number of lines is required to meet the demands of subscribers. If the user too often is greeted by a busy signal, the service might as well not exist.

Ask if the provider provides customer support. Setting up a SLIP/PPP connection on a computer is not easy. Regardless of what dialer/Winsock is employed on the user's machine, there are a number of settings that must be configured properly. Does the provider furnish connection scripts for Trumpet and Windows 95? Is a user manual available? The provider can't be expected to teach basic computer operation, but there will be questions to be answered, especially during the initial setup. Another question that should be asked is whether the provider furnishes the basic tools needed for Internet access, such as shareware Winsocks, mail readers, FTP utilities and Web browsers. While these can be obtained from other sources, the provider who makes them available to customers is performing an extra service.

2. What will it cost me?

Normally, ISPs will charge a monthly fee for their services. In addition, there is often a one-time setup fee. The provider may levy additional charges for time used over and above a stated monthly allowance. Storage space for your own Web page may be an extra cost item. My ISP currently charges a \$10 setup fee, and \$25 per month for combined SLIP/PPP Internet access and a SHELL account. They do not set a time limit. This pricing probably is on the generous side, but other providers should be in the same ball park, price-wise. If you can comparison shop, find out about down-time. Ask customers of competing local ISPs what their experience has been. A lower rate is not a bargain if the provider has considerable down time, or lacks an experienced technician(s) to provide customer assistance.

Also, you should compare the cost of a local Internet connection with what you would have pay to reach your favorite online service, or major Internet provider, by calling one of their own nodes long-distance. Consider how frequently you use the Internet. PSI Pipeline offers unlimited Internet access for only \$20 per month.

Add to this basic cost, whatever you must pay the phone company for long-distance calls. If you don't cruise the Net that often, the \$25 or more you would have to pay a local ISP monthly may not be such a bargain. On the other hand, an ISP may make sense even if you live in an area where an online service has a local node. The last time I checked, CIS offered only a 2400 bps node in Charleston, WV. A person living in that city might well be ahead to pay a local ISP for a higher speed PPP connection to CIS in preference to the slow local node. There are many factors to consider in determining cost-effectiveness.

So now you have chosen a local ISP, and you have managed to configure Trumpet or Windows 95's Slip/PPP module (congratulations - not an easy task) to connect with the service. What tools do you need, and where to find them?

The Internet is *information*. To access that information, you will want to consider the following tools:

- 1. A Web Browser**
- 2. A Usenet News reader**
- 3. Telnet capability**
- 4. An FTP utility**
- 5. An Archie utility**
- 6. An IRC utility**

7. An Email reader

The first decision to make is whether you want all of the above, and perhaps other capabilities available under a common interface, or as separate software packages. The first approach is probably the best for new users, and there are an increasing number of pre-packaged Suites on the market. Of course, the major online services offer Internet access via the same proprietary front-end software that connects the user to their own services, and that software can be used via your local Internet provider. But this route to The Internet can be expensive. In effect, you are paying Compuserve, Prodigy or AOL to provide you with much of what you already have access to, at no additional cost, by virtue of your ISP. Before going this route, investigate the Internet suites that are available. Examples of the newest include CyberJack (Delrina), Emissary (Wollensock), and the Internet Suite from Quarterdeck.

I have used trial versions of all of the above, so I know that they offer a Web Browser, Telnet, News, Email, FTP and IRC, and can be used via a PPP connection provided by a local Internet provider. The only additional service that might be needed is access to a Usenet news feed. (More on this later.) These products do differ in interface and ease of configuration. I can offer no guidance as to which is *best*. What is *right* for one user may be *wrong* for another. My advice is to seek out others who are using these tools, and ask questions. Or, find out what others consider the strong and weak function of each program by hanging out on the online conferences devoted to such issues.

The greatest flexibility is offered by separate Internet utilities, each devoted to a single purpose, or in the case of Web Browsers, several

uses. Many of these separates have the added virtue of being freeware or low-cost shareware. The most popular Web Browser is Netscape. The latest beta version is free, and the program is updated frequently. If you want the latest, greatest, cutting-edge technology, Netscape is really the only choice at the moment. Various flavors of Mosaic are also popular. The most popular browsers also offer email and news capability, although these functions are not the equals of separate mail and news programs. FTP is a given with browsers. Telnet capability, so far, requires a helper application. (see below.)

People have a tendency to defend their choice of email and news readers with a ferocity one normally associates with baseball fanatics at World Series time. You should look for programs that handle both reading and posting mail and news offline. It doesn't make sense to tie up your local providers lines with tasks that can be done offline. In this regard, be wary of the suites and Net Browsers discussed above. Some have email and news modules that only operate online. Here, I am going to give some advice. Look at Forte's Agent and its less capable but still excellent free version (Free Agent). It's an excellent Usenet news program, and the commercial version (\$30) does a decent job with email, thus killing two birds with one stone.

Before proceeding to other Internet tools, it's time to consider the problem of finding a decent Usenet news provider. In many cases your local ISP makes a nearby news source available at no extra charge. However, most local Usenet sources only carry selected groups, and their feeds often are delayed by several days, or longer. There are over 30,000 newsgroups out there. If the ones you want aren't available through the local provider, or are outdated when you receive them, you must look elsewhere, and be willing to pay extra.

I discovered that, surprisingly, information about the locations of

Usenet providers is difficult to find. A Web search only yielded a few commercial outfits, along with numerous *public access* sources. I take public access to mean free. I suspect that many of these are not reachable through a PPP/Slip connection, and those that are probably do not carry the full Usenet feed. What about commercial news providers? I finally tracked down some through dfw.internet.providers news group. I'm not going to name those I did uncover, since some of the smaller providers do not appreciate publicity that might bring hordes of new customers they are ill-equipped to handle. Expect to pay \$10 to \$30 monthly for a subscription to one of these commercial Usenet servers. After you locate one, but before committing yourself, ask how many groups they carry and how current their feed is.

Remember, subscribing to a major online service, like AOL, gives you access to most of the Usenet groups. The downside is that you are limited to using the service's front-end software if you connect via PPP/Slip from a local ISP. You can't use your choice of news readers unless you connect with the service by dialing one of it's own nodes, where user names and passwords are checked before the Internet connection is established. Doing this, of course, negates the notion of saving long-distance charges by subscribing to a local ISP.

More information about Usenet providers can be found on the Web at:
<http://library.usask.ca/hytelnet/sites2.html>

You probably will want a Telnet application. There is a popular program called Ewan, and it's free. But Ewan, like some other freeware Telnet applications, lacks the ability to upload or download anything from the system you connect to. It only permits looking at the remote screen, making it rather useless for connecting to, say Channel1. Make certain any such app you consider does allow file transfers. One that does meet this requirement is a shareware program NetTerm.

Another is QmodemPro for Windows 95. This is a commercial communications package that offers about all of the Telnet bells and whistles one could ask for.

Archie and FTP utilities work together. The first searches the Internet for files; the second retrieves them. There any number of good ones available. If you like the idea of using the Internet as a CB Radio, you will also want to investigate IRC utilities. I have no advice to offer here.

The best place I have found to learn about what's available in the way of Internet utilities is the excellent Shroud's CSWApps List, on the Web at:

<http://cwapps.texas.net>

Another good source on the Web is The Ultimate Collection of Windsock Software, at:

<http://www.tucows.com/>

Between these two sources, you will find a gold mine of Internet applications and other goodies. Shroud provides complete descriptions and ratings, as well as links to the sites from which the programs can be downloaded.

Hopefully, this article has provided some insight into the Internet solutions that are now available for those of us who live in places that were deemed unprofitable by the big online services and Internet providers when they chose where to place local nodes. We may not --- have to continue enriching AT&T, MCI et al. to *surf the net*. The local Internet provider is a resource well worth investigating.

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DriveSpace 3 - The Advanced File System for Windows 95

Copyright 1995 by Jim Gunn

Okay, you were a Doublespaceaphobic, and a Stack monster ate your disk - er...maybe, and DriveSpace brought aliens from the planet Gumupenderworks through a weird void and destroyed all your data! I guess there are other popular myths about computers too. But really, compression routines have matured.

We now have version three of the Microsoft compression gadget. This new kid on the block is included with the PLUS! pack. Its name is DriveSpace 3 and there is a lot to it - a whole lot! Now before you yell *compression - arrgh*, read on and feel free to try it a bit at a time until you have the security blanket comfy up under your chin. Personally, I've been using this beastie for months, and would never go back to plain old FAT.

- First of all, a wonderful feature of DriveSpace 3 is that you don't have to compress any data at all to take advantage of its major but unpublished features.
- Second, and very important, the old myth about slow performance has a number of new twists that are really worth looking into.
- Third, this is the advanced file system that Windows 95 deserved only the authors didn't realize it at the time.
- Fourth, the hue and cry about the 110K driver business is easily rectified.

DriveSpace 3 requires that you put all of your data into a single file, known as a CVF, or Compressed Volume File, just like the DoubleSpace/DriveSpace shipped in the past. If you lost the FAT entries on the host, or uncompressed volume, this file would be gone. How often does that happen? People who whoop and holler about that seldom seem to have remembered to make a backup. Nor do they consider that if their FAT is destroyed, all their uncompressed files are gone bye-bye anyway. The net result is the same.

This all in one basket CVF does buy us something extremely significant. There is no longer a *slack* factor. There are no such things as *clusters*, *allocation units* or even the simple minded old *sector* to deal with. Once in a CVF, data is data, and all of that old DOS gibberish is history. Data simply lives where it lands, and the old bugaboo about a 10 byte file taking up a whole allocation unit is totally history. Even better, that ten byte file no longer even takes up even a single 512 byte sector, but now takes up simply 10 bytes, -period! The whole mess about clusters is simply gone.

Now all of this part is strictly internal. DOS, Windows, and everything external to the CVF swears that you have 32K clusters and all the slack overhead of the FAT system. This is a pleasant lie and is simply for compatibility because the old FAT system requires it. Rest assured, it is nothing more than humoring the old way of doing things. And unlike previous versions of compression programs, this one deals with up to 2GB per CVF. It has no 512KB limitations.

But now, let's look at the actual compression part. As mentioned earlier, you don't really have to compress anything in order to take

advantage of the *allocation units are history* part of DriveSpace 3. But what if you (shudder!) do?

Well, if you let it do what it calls *normal* compression you will achieve something on the order of 1.9:1 compression. That's *way kewel*, as my kids would say, but there is a significant performance enhancement to be had here, too.

It seems that if you are on a Pentium class machine, the processing overhead required to do the dreaded decompression/compression deed is way less than the physical transfer time of the uncompressed data through the normal system bus. The net result is improved throughput. On a 486 class system, throughput is about the same. But in either case you still get the space savings of both compression and the elimination of the FAT system allocation limitations.

Compression varies with the file type and content, of course. A .ZIP file simply isn't going to compress as well as a text file. There are four classes of compression in DriveSpace 3 and the ratios are simply averages of testing with various file types:

1. None
2. The ever popular Normal (about 1.8 or 1.9:1)
3. Hi-pack (roughly 2:1)
4. Ultra-Pack (over 2:1)

A nice feature is that these can be mixed and matched. Unlike previous compression schemes, DriveSpace 3 comes with a gizmo called *Compression Agent*. When you set it up, you can have a default compression scheme specified. Then periodically, you can run Compression Agent and have it make adjustments. A classic example

is to have normal compression be your default and yet have Compression Agent detect any file that has not been accessed in more than 30 days and compress those files using Ultra-Pack. If one of those files eventually gets accessed, using this example, the next time Compression Agent is run, it will convert it back to Normal compression. It displays a screen which keeps tabs on how much space is being compressed and how much is being uncompressed or altered to a different scheme.

Compression Agent is slow. At its best, it can take an hour or so per gigabyte just to do a scan, even if no real activity is required. If there are lots of changes to be made this can stretch out considerably. Obviously, drive speed, controller type and throughput vary from system to system and affect this part significantly. Another consideration is that every time anything at all changes on the disk, that Compression Agent itself didn't do, it starts over. Therefore it is not suitable for running in any mode other than stand alone.

To the rescue comes another product included in the PLUS! pack. This one is known as the *System Agent*. Among other things, it can be used to schedule Compression Agent to run at off-peak times (computer jargon for the middle of the night). This way, you can have it scheduled to do the compression thing at say, two AM on Saturday mornings and all you have to do is remember to leave the system running on Friday nights. You pick the times that are suitable for your usage.

A justifiable complaint about DriveSpace 3 is the amount of memory required in the lower 1MB to hold its real mode drivers. Let me tell you how to avoid that problem all together. It seems that the default installation updates your CONFIG.SYS file to include the line:

DEVICE=C:\WINDOWS\DRVSPACE.SYS /MOVE

This is a holdover from the original DoubleSpace/DriveSpace and is an oddball thing. Even though the program is named with a .SYS extension, it really never was a driver. All it ever did was determine the location of the DBLSPACE.BIN or DRVSPACE.BIN file in memory. The /MOVE parameter told it to locate it in upper memory, if available. After this statement is executed, DRVSPACE.SYS goes away and no longer exists.

But, what happens is that the .BIN file still exists, and so do the real mode drivers, until Windows 95 cranks up in GUI mode. At that point, it replaces the real mode drivers with virtual equivalents. This all sounds great in theory. The problem is that since some or all of this stuff has been placed in upper memory (UMB space). When the virtual drivers finally arrive on the scene, they can free up whatever portion was loaded in conventional memory but cannot touch the parts that made it to upper memory. This then becomes wasted space.

Another aspect of this problem is that when booting to the Command Prompt Only part of Windows 95, none of the replacement of real mode vs. virtual drivers has taken place yet. You are out up to 110K of this precious limited lower 1MB memory. In either case, some memory is totally wasted. It simply depends on the particular configuration, what else is loaded in upper memory and all that stuff. But, this is not a desirable situation.

Once more, help is on the way, and you read it here. The solution is to let the installation part do its thing. Now edit CONFIG.SYS and (drum roll) comment out or remove the entire line referencing DRVSPACE.SYS. Now reboot and that's all there is to it!

What now happens is that since you are no longer telling it to relocate the .BIN file into upper memory, none of that gets done. Because of that, there is no need for the real mode drivers. Instead, the common sense thing happens. The virtual drivers load themselves into extended memory -where they belong and would end up anyway- at boot time. You will find no trace of anything dealing with DriveSpace 3 in the first megabyte.

You can even dual boot to a previous version of DOS and it will be able to access your compressed volume with no trace of drivers. The entire 110K is history as far as you are concerned. True, it still exists somewhere in extended memory, but I'll guarantee that you have a whole lot more stuff loaded there than you would care to know about, so the 110K part enters the world of *who cares?* pretty quickly. You can't see it, smell it or touch it and it just melts quietly into the swapfile somewhere or other.

This is a very flexible and functional product that reaches far beyond its original intent. Even if you couldn't care less about compressing anything, in essence, it provides the advanced file system that everyone wishes Windows 95 had included, while still maintaining the complete FAT system compatibility that we all need. I find it

interesting that the compression part of a compression program is simply an added bonus to its otherwise unheralded features.

And don't forget to let it Ultra-Pack those files untouched in 30 days or more, no matter how much physical disk space you have. It's the principle of the thing.

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Windows95 Applications and Human Learning Styles

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I've spent the last three months, on and off, trying to learn three Microsoft Windows 95 applications: MSN, WORKS and MONEY. I've been writing, using and testing software for twenty years -- so I'm no novice. Up until now, I've felt pretty good about my ability to take on new software with even the most badly written documentation and become a power user within a day to a week. The truth is that the new Microsoft Windows95 applications have knocked me off my throne.

There is no documentation, - not even poorly written documentation - and there lies the problem! Take the Microsoft Network. Its' poor, confusing and hodgepodge design cries out for a road map. Since one is not provided, bring along some string. Tie the string securely to your starting point and use it to guide yourself back out of the maze. Should you find a place you might want to visit again, mark your trail well or you'll never find it again. WORKS ? Other than writing this column, I have not successfully completed any project including trying to write a letter and have the return address automatically inserted, to creating mailing labels, to just creating one sided post cards! I know my old 16 bit Windows applications like Print Shop and Word Perfect may not be sexy but they are easy to use. As for MONEY, all I wanted to do was create a budget so I could easily change numbers and then print it all out. After a couple of tries, I did manage to get my online

electronic payment application completed and printed but as for the budget, a few days ago I went back to paper and pencil!

While I am approaching middle age, I still have a few functioning brain cells left and after giving this quite a bit of thought, I've decided the problem is them and not me. In the brief period of time that personal computing has been around, some software vendors like Microsoft have gone from providing nice, thick manuals telling you more than you'd ever wanted to know about their product to telling you nothing. Because, they claim that their products are so easy to use, who needs a manual? Well I do and more than likely so do you! Why? For most of us frustrated users, the Help Screens don't seem to help and Wizards just whiz right by us without leaving a hint. This is not because of lack of intelligence on our part but rather because we are human.

Being human speaks to diverse learning styles and needs. My recent experiences with Microsoft's Win95, Microsoft Works for Win95, Microsoft Money for Win95 and the Microsoft Network have convinced me that a return to the policy of including a good, thick manual is just what the user, friendly doctor ordered.

Readers may remember when software applications came with two and sometime three books. The first was the USER MANUAL -- preferably, a nice, friendly and personable book on how to use the software to do everything from A - Z. Good USER MANUALS included many examples and tutorials. And some USER MANUALS incorporated an informal style as though the writer was talking directly to the reader including humor, tips and off-subject tangents. The second was the REFERENCE MANUAL which got into the nitty-gritty details of how and why things worked so that if the

instructions in the USER MANUAL didn't work one could try to concoct various solutions from information provided in the REFERENCE MANUAL. The third book was the INTRODUCTION GETTING STARTED booklet designed for those *who don't need no stink'n manual*; - just let them at it.

Current thinking, at least by Microsoft is to just give us the GETTING STARTED and ignore all evidence that humans *do* learn differently. A good USER MANUAL allowed for the differences in learning styles. About a fourth of us are kinetic -also called tactile- learners; we learn by doing. Task Wizards of which Microsoft has become overly fond, can be quite useful to kinetic users because they are actually doing something as the Wizards walks them step by step through a process. The problem is that there is no manual to explain what commands were used to obtain the given result. That could mean that many are forever doomed to live within the pre-designed templates of the Wizard. They can't take the hands on learning and combine it with written instructions to create their own projects. The examples and step by step instructions of good USER MANUAL addressed this need.

Next we have auditory learners or those who learn by hearing. The prevailing wisdom for much of human history is that we, particularly children, learn by listening. The teacher stands before us lecturing on and on and we soak it up via our ear drums just like sponges. For about a fourth of us, this is true. A personable, friendly often humorous teacher talking directly to the reader, as a writings style, addresses auditory learners. Whether the reader reads aloud or can hear the writer voice in their head, the goal of talking to the learner is met. Many third party USER MANUALS such as the *Dummies* and

Idiots series use this approach in addition to step by step examples.

Visual learners learn by seeing. If you can show them an example, a picture or an object, they can make the leap. This is why teachers and instructors write on blackboards, use posters and other visual aids. A good USER MANUAL includes pictures of what each step should look like on the screen as well as the end product. The little eighty-five page booklet included with Microsoft Works had lots of great pictures of the most common screen setups and of many types of documents the Task Wizard could help you create. In terms of step by stop photos of how to do a series of tasks, the booklet regularly referred to the text based unhelpful Online Help.

Online Help are designed for the remaining quarter of the human population including me, or abstract learners or thinkers. Abstract learners like to read the instructions, usually in great detail, think about them and then apply them. Help Screens are notoriously short on details but an even larger shortcoming is the reader has to pick the right keywords to get appropriate help. This is a lot more difficult then it seems. With a good USER MANUAL, a user can begin with either the Table of Contents or the Subject Index as starting point. Thumbing through the pages and skimming paragraphs and examples until, in all likelihood, the user finds the explanation they need. Help Screens tend to be circular leaving the frustrated user right back where they started and no more enlightened. Details in the help screen are sketchy and don't give one much to think about or move forward with -- especially if you want to do something slightly different or more than the Help Screen was designed to explain.

All of us, barring any physical disability, have the ability to use all learning styles but we do have a preferred and dominant learning styles. We now know that a good teacher tries to address all learning styles. My two favorite windows applications are Print Shop Ensemble

and WordPerfect. Both come with substantial USER GUIDES and I think that in turn reflects in their general ease of use. As one who has written complex computer programs and the accompanying manuals, the writing of the manuals can be quite helpful in spotting problems. At one point, we were required to write both a USER MANUAL and a PROGRAMMERS REFERENCE GUIDE. USER MANUALS are extremely useful in verifying whether a feature is really easy to use or self-evident in its purpose. The PROGRAMMER GUIDE tended to illuminate technical problems such as sloppy coding or poor system design. The growing market of computer program documentation is evidence there is strong user demand for good, solid, substantial documentation.

So why don't software vendors do themselves a favor and return to writing user documentation? Look at it as quality control and beta testing. If your writers can't explain or get others to make features work from their written instructions, its a good bet this undocumentable feature is another bug.

For additional information about learning styles, try these web sites:

Discover Your Own Learning Style

<http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/hccinfo/facdev/lsi.html>

New Students - New Learning Styles

<http://web.gmu.edu/bcox/Academia/KierseyLearningStyles.html> (25k)

Learning Styles - How People Learn

<http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/hccinfo/facdev/8.html> (1k)

Seven Styles of Learning

<http://www.wordsimages.com/ewinters/styles.htm> (5k)

Exploring Technology and School Reform
<http://k12.cnidr.org:90/resource.cntnts.html>

Learning Styles Network Newsletter (back issues)
<gopher://sjumusic.stjohns.edu:70/1-GOP/@lsi%3Anews.menu>

***Robin Mabry** has a varied and strong background in both teaching and programming. She is a **WindoWatch** contributor and brings a wealth of hands-on experience to her writing.*

A WindoWatch feature

IDIOTS-REDUX © 1995 by Bob Miller

Once again, we dive bravely into that uncharted wasteland that passes for their brain cells as we attempt to understand how professional computer magazine writers can produce inane, moronic and silly drivel month after month after month.

This month, we start with that horror called the 2,000 tips!

Windows Magazine (11/21/95)

Leaving aside the fact that they got to the 2,000 number by including quantities of useless *tips* and repeated some three or four times, some times on adjacent pages, they also included:

[on 3.x]

Remember to close all open applications and then Windows itself before reaching for the power switch.

Really? My Windows programs always close themselves properly when I close Windows. They even prompt me if I have an open file that needs saving.

[add SUBST F: D:.....]

People who use SUBST under 3.x are the same ones who enjoy Russian Roulette.

If you are removing a Program, don't forget to remove its icon. Choose the icon and select File/Delete in Program Manager.

Hitting the delete key is faster and easier.

If you have a new hard disk that is faster than the old one, put your swap file on it. [*That is correct*]. Specify the drive and directory for the file on the Swapdisk= line in ... SYSTEM.INI.

*Only if you are a big fan of **Corrupt Swapfile** messages. Human beings use Control Panel, 386enh, virtual memory, change.*

Windows uses a program called VSHARE to do the same job.

No it doesn't, dumb-dumb. WFWG does but this section is on 3.x.

Your permanent swap file must be no larger than the largest contiguous free segment on the specified hard disk.

*Try **HALF** the largest*

If you have less than 4MB of RAM and use Windows 3.1, or less than 8MB and use WFWG, the swap file should be around 8MB and 16MB respectively.

Only if you really like rotten performance. Try 4-6 and 4 respectively. Fill a 16MB PSF and your 486-100 will perform like a 386-16.

If you are having trouble with drive letters, make sure that your LASTDRIVE= is set high enough.... Unless you are using a Novell network, setting it to Z should fix any problems.

Gee, the Novell systems I see all have an =Z line. Guess I'd better go delete it.

Avoid dropped characters on high speed connections by using the Xon/Xoff protocol for your transmissions.

He must really love CRC errors and download aborted messages. People with IQ's higher than potted palm trees, however, use CTS/RTS not Xon/Xoff.

Some transfer protocols just work faster than others. The fastest we've encountered is ZModem.

May I introduce you to YModem-G?

[on Win95]

Windows 95, unlike 3.x, does not use a permanent swap file but you can make the swap file a fixed size.

This is true. And you can compute with your monitor turned off to save electricity too. They are equally useful tips. 95 uses a dynamic swap file and it should be allowed to manage it by itself.

From the regular November issue.

I'd like to be able to open desktop objects without closing my open applications. Two options come to mind

[followed by how to create a shortcut to the desktop and assign it to a hot key and using Run desktop] Right click on the task bar and choose minimize all is too difficult for you?

[on the P-6 or Pentium Pro]

Although the Windows 95 users who employ true 32 bit applications will see speed gains.....

No they won't. If you had really used the Pro instead of just gushing over it, you would know that it actually runs 95 slower than a Pentium. It is the OS that matters most.

[it] should replace the Pentium as the desktop standard sometime in 1996.

Fat chance.

Since it's a 386SX, it has no math co-processor.

Really? While a 486SX has no co-processor, a 386SX may or may not since the SX refers to the data bus on that chip.

CD-R is the best way to back up your hard disk.

\$20 a piece, single use disks (although you can put more than one backup onto a disk) combined with \$1,000+ CD-R drives is better than a \$200 tape drive and \$10 tapes that can be used over and over again? I don't think so.

[Win95 tips of the month - same issue]

Before you install Win95, uninstall any antivirus programs you have.

Why? Sure, you should disable them but disabling does not equal uninstalling.

**Copy, Cut, Paste.
CTRL+C copies, etc.**

This is a 95 tip of the month? We were doing this in Windows 2.0 seven years ago.

PC Magazine, October 10.

Don't push too hard for cluster-size economies, though. I would chop a 2GB drive into three logical drives - at most and a 4GB into five.

Nice for you since you don't pay for your new drives. But we might not like a one line batch file or a single icon to use 16k of hard drive space. Normal people use 512MB as the maximum size for a single partition.

From our Idiot's Hall of Fame charter member, John Dvorak.

Microsoft has gone berserk with Word file formats.

Really? WinWord 7.0 uses the same format as 6.0. 6.0 can read 2.0. There is a free filter to allow 2.0 to read 6.0. This is berserk?

PC Mag, November 21.

Dvorak again.

Team OS/2 is on virtually every forum passing around rumors and outlining flaws in Windows 95. [followed by a bunch of dirty tricks that they are doing] I blame Microsoft.....

So, if you are mugged on the way home, it is your fault for having something the mugger wanted? Do you always blame the victim?

Bill Machrone's lead column - same issue.

Ever heard the phrase "grew like Topsy"? ... Actually Topsy was a fabulously successful race horse.. Of his parentage and lineage, his trainer said "He don't have no lineage. He just grewed".

- 1) The actual quotation is "I 'spect I grewed. Don't think nobody never made me".**
- 2) The source is one of the most important books ever published - Uncle Tom's Cabin".**
- 3) Topsy is a major character in that book - not a racehorse.**
- 4) Harriet Beecher Stowe , "little lady that started this great war" in Lincoln's words, was not a horse trainer.**
- 5) You, sir, are a barbarian !**

[from a review of ViewScan Color 16M]

Recognita's OCR program, Go-CR, produced garbled text from the clearest of documents...Also, on several occasions Go-CR caused the scanner to stop working altogether.... The ViewScan Color 16M give hand-held scanners a new lease on life.

Oh, boy. Now, suppose, given the above comments, you explain just why I would want a "new lease on life" with such a product?

PC Computing, November 1995

I wouldn't even think of running Windows 95 without the System Resource Meter.

I would. I've loaded it twice in two months. I may never bother again.

[from CD-MOM 95 the Mother of all Windows 95 books-Same Issue]

Finally, you'll want to get rid of your LASTDRIVE setting.....remove the whole line. The letter on the end may be an f or a z. Don't worry about it. Zap out the entire line.

Why do I think that anyone on a Network might have just the slight-est problem with this?

You might think that you can reorder the icons in the Start menu's Programs folder of subfolders. But you're wrong. Microsoft mounts your programs as menu entries in alphabetical order. and, while that is as good a default as any, defaults are meant to be customized to a user's liking. I've been hinting around for a workaround for quite some time and haven't found one.

This is, of course, a really difficult one so it is no wonder that it was beyond his ability. I want \FOO to be the first item so I renamed it \!FOO. Boy, that was so hard I'll need to take time off to recover from all the effort.

Chicago Sun Times-Don Crabb's computer Q&A column Sun. Nov 12

Q - How often should I defrag my hard disk? My friend tells me I should do this every week.

A - Defrag your hard disk every week only if you want to lose your data regularly and you like to waste time on computer trivialities...

I sent him E-mail and asked him what his basis was for this. I mentioned that the correct answer would be "It depends on how often you add & delete files..." I mentioned that I have never lost data during a defrag, even when power was lost during the process. His response was basically "You got lucky"

2) Windows Sources - Matthew Klare - "Storage" page 190

Para 3 "...Opting for a permanent swap file (ideally about 20MB)...

I thank John Pindelski for bringing these two to my attention. The parenthetical comment above is from him. No further comments from me are needed.

Infoworld, 10/30

Q. After an upgrade to Win95, does it make any sense to run MemMaker?

A. Yes. Just as with DOS and Windows 3.x, a system running Win95 first boots a version of DOS. After Autoexec.bat runs, the GUI takes over.....a memory manager and optimizer are still helpful. I also recommend that you invest in a third party memory manager - one designed for Windows 95.

Well, since I don't have an autoexec.bat file, I guess my GUI will never run. For 99 44/100 % of people, any memory manager in Win95 is as useful at teats on a bull. To suggest that people spend \$50-100 on a third party memory manager is ludicrous.

PC Computing is always good for a few entries here (at least until my subscription runs out) and the December issue is no exception.

From the Letters column.

Reader: Please stop putting shareware programs in your Free Stuff listing. Shareware is reasonable but it is not free.

PC: Not Quite. Shareware is not for sale. It's freely available, and you're not obligated to pay. But it works on the honor system. If you use an application, you're expected to make a small donation \$5- \$15.

I assume this answer was intended to be your submission in the Proctology Journal Of America Centerfold of the Month contest. You have a LEGAL obligation to pay if you continue to use the program. Shareware prices are set by the people whose sweat and efforts went into creating it - not by your absurd \$5-15 statement. Some, of course, have \$79-99 registration charges. And to put an answer like this into a magazine that is geared for new to moderately experienced users is little short of criminal. You should be ashamed.

The next three entries are from the same issue in the Windows95 Buyer Guide.....software guide to essential -- and entertaining -- home and office applications.

Formbuster 2.1. Cons: Windows 95 version is still in the works.

Gee - then what is it doing in a review of Win95 software?

OfficeBlox for Windows 95. Con: OfficeBlox works under Win95 only.

So what? What was the heading of this section again?

PageKeeper 2.1. Cons: ...there's no voice-mail support.

Hey, dodo, this is an OCR and indexing program. It doesn't walk the dog or do the dishes either. Why should it do voice-mail?

***Bob Miller** does know how to turn a phrase! He supports the BBS nets with his time and expertise. He is host or co-host of many of the Windows or Windows related conferences on RIME and Ilink...too many to mention them all here. He is a regular **WindoWatch** contributor.*

Alice's Doors

Copyright 1995 by Peter Neuendorffer



Alice is working on Doors, a step to advance the paperless office. Alice, the noted designer, and my friend, sat across from me in front of her new desk. Our reflections grinned back at us from the vast smoked glass desktop. Across the room, a wall hanging glowed a dim grey, with the word *ready* flashing in the top left. A microphone hung from the ceiling. Alice pushed some buttons, and the middle of the desk glowed, as though a monitor was underneath it. She brought up other patches of light. The entire

desktop was a touch screen, and the patches could be switched around with a tap. She could also write on these patches with a light pen, or use a virtual keyboard - like an air guitar - or in more mundane terms, a standard keyboard or mouse.

From one program she printed a report. When she touched the corner of that patch, it opened up slightly so she could remove the report. Any patch could be propped up perpendicular to the desk top for easier reading. The wall hanging was a literal image of the entire desktop. Alice used a pointing device attached to her finger, which she waved about to manipulate the cursor. Also, when taking voice dictation, she could edit the text as it appeared. Various places on her easy-chair

were pre-programmed to cause commands when tapped. Both the desktop and the wall hanging had Zoom In features. "It retails for \$999.00" she said, and turned off the screens so we could see our reflections once more bobbing in the ether.

Peter Neuendorffer and his friend Alice bring us brief glimpses into their world, where the impossible can become plausible. Peter is a Windows programmer and is a regular contributor to [WindoWatch](#).



Acrobat continued:

Some info gleaned from Adobe's Acrobat Web area:

Adobe's ATM technology for rendering Type 1 fonts has been built into Acrobat Reader 2.1 for Windows so it is no longer necessary to install ATM on Windows systems. Previously, you needed ATM running to be able to use the Reader.

Acrobat Reader 2.1 accepts some specially enabled plug-ins, such as Weblink and Movie. This allows Acrobat Reader users to take advantage of new capabilities in PDF files created with Acrobat Exchange, for example following WWW URL links or viewing QuickTime and AVI (Win only) movies within a PDF document.

Although Reader 2.1 is Win95 compatible, it is not yet Win95 logo compliant. This means they will run under Win95 but may not meet all of Microsoft's guidelines for complete Win95 compliance, such as various user interface elements, long filenames, etc. A Win95 logo-compliant versions of Acrobat Reader is scheduled for early 1996.

For those with HP III printers (PCL) you should upgrade your printer driver. You need the file HPPCL5.EXE available on CIS and from Microsoft's download service (206-936-6735). Adobe is also offering a several new FREE plug-ins for use with the Acrobat Reader 2.1 and Acrobat Exchange 2.x See the Acrobat Web site for details (<http://www.adobe.com/Acrobat>)

A Xmas List

Dear Santa,

In the words of the Oliver J. Dragon, "All I want for Christmas is ."

The holidays are upon us so it's time to begin my wish list. It should be easy to do with so many new computer toys. A P5 with 16 meg of RAM would be nice with at least a gig hard drive and multimedia of course. Make sure the modem is a 28.8 and you might throw in a flat bed scanner so I can upload some graphics, fax forms and docs through the machine. While I'm at it why not an ISDN line until the cable modems hit the market.

Of course, that's for the house! I will *need* a laptop with an active matrix screen with no less than 8 meg of RAM and a 28.8 PCMCIA modem so I can take the Internet on the road. A cellular modem? No, that can wait until next year. But please, don't forget the extra batteries.

For the family, there are great CD's: cook books, planners, graphics, prep programs for the SAT. An e-mail box for my wife (daughter Sarah already has her own). Of course when I get the P5 Sarah gets the pawn shop special so she benefits from the P5, too. Maybe we need a third phone line or possibly a fourth.

And we still don't have cable. While we're at it, how about a big screen tv--with surround sound. Of course, that'll mean new speakers! Better get new book cases for the living room...and a new sofa.

Wait a minute. Something is missing here. Maybe Ollie had a point. I don't need my two front teeth, but maybe we need to be a little more introspective. Maybe there *are* other values at this time of year.

Those who agree raise your hands and say - Fran!

Happy Holidays!

Your good friend...the ModemJunkie

Leonard Grossman

PC-NFS and Win 95

Copyright 1995 by Jim Plumb

Some background

At work I recently received shipment of a new Pentium-based PC bundled with Windows 95.

The Network: Sun machines running Solaris 2.4, a Unix operating system from Sun Microsystems, as file/print servers. The production environment includes Macs, PCs and Suns; the printers - various laser printers and imagesetters

On the PC side we need Network File System (NFS) software or client to access file and print services on the Suns which is not included in Windows 95. Solaris has a built-in NFS server which handles the sharing of network resources. Also running is *pcnfsd*, a *daemon*, similar to a DOS TSR, to allow for user login authentication, and file and printer browsing. This piece of software is now in the public domain and many of the PC-NFS clients use it. Also needed on the PC side is a TCP/IP stack, which is basically the underlying communications protocol between the PC and the Sun allowing the user to run software like FTP and Telnet. As you may or may not know, this IS included in Windows 95.

Our PCs have been running various versions of Sun's PC-NFS and PC-NFS Pro. PC-NFS is DOS-based using TSRs while PC-NFS Pro is Windows-based, that is, the drivers load when Windows loads. PC-NFS uses its own TCP/IP stack, however Win95 already has its own TCP/IP stack.

On the Sun, you specify which resources (file systems) are available to network users. Depending on your version of Unix, this is called exporting or sharing. Your NFS client lets you mount or map exported network file systems as local drive letters and maps network printers to LPT ports. Currently there are several vendors with mature NFS clients that run on Win 3.xx platforms and specialize in PC/Unix connectivity. On the other hand NFS support for Win 95 is in its infancy, as I found out. I figured that PC-NFS Pro, with its purely MS-Windows inter-face would work very well with Win95. I figured wrong.

Too Many Trials and Tribulations

After I got my new Pentium box up and running, I decided to get it onto our corporate network using Sun PC/NFS-Pro. Unfortunately, when you get bundled software (Win 95) you don't get much in the way of documentation. What you do get is practically useless beyond the most simple usage directions and, of course, nothing about setting up network connections. Eventually I discovered the network setup was in the control panel. I also learned that Win95 had discovered my network card and had installed the basic Microsoft network: the Microsoft Client and the IPX/SPX Protocol and the NetBeui Protocol.

I didn't think I'd need them, so I deleted them and looked around for something familiar. Under the *Add* button, under *Client* I did find Sun PC-NFS Client but not the Pro client. I installed the PC-NFS client, said okay and exited. The Network setup box asked for the *PC-NFS disk* to install. Which one I wondered. I tried them all, but none had the *.inf files Win95 was looking for. I hoped that maybe I didn't need to load it and looked around for other mischief to get into. Aha! Under *Add*, *Protocol* and *Microsoft* I found TCP/IP Protocol. I know how that works. So I proceeded to set that up and filled in all the addresses, servers and gateways and such. I exited and was told to reboot. I did and tried to mount a network drive. **Computer name does not exist** is what I was told. I thought that maybe I could get away with just using TCP/IP. Then I remembered reading some-where that you needed an

NFS client unless you were using a Microsoft type network, which to me meant something like Netware.

I decided to do a regular install of PC-NFS Pro. That went fine until I got to the part about which kind of network card driver to choose. My choices were NDIS drivers or packet drivers and I didn't know what an NDIS driver was! I had been using packet drivers, but there were none listed for my card, except for one that was similar. You guessed it. I used that.

I filled out some more configuration stuff, more addresses, server names and when done was told to go into Windows setup and specify PC-NFS Pro as my primary network. *Okay* I clicked. *Cannot find Windows setup* said my machine. Okay so I went back to the network control panel to *Add, Client, Sun, PC/NFS-Pro*, except it wasn't there! So I just selected PC-NFS again and did what I could to set it up. I exited, rebooted, and I began to see the PC-NFS Pro Login startup until I got an error message to the effect that Windows couldn't initialize my network card!

Of course I went through the configurations many times looking for an elusive typo I must have made. Nope! Pretty frustrated at this point it dawned on me that perhaps I should check the Sun Forum on Compuserve, for someone else who has tried to do this. And of course I discovered dozens of others who had been beating their heads against the same wall. I confess to relief when I found out it wasn't just me. I also learned that Sun "has been waiting for Win95 to gain a larger market share before upgrading NFS for Win95" said the forum spokesman. In the meantime they have a neat workaround! I must download a patch and proceed with some specific setup instructions and *it should work like magic* - a direct quote! Part of the patch were two *.inf files to copy into Win95's \windows\inf directory. Of course, with my lack of documentation I didn't know that the INF directory is hidden. Eventually, it dawned on me that it was and accomplished this challenging task! The *.inf files tell Win95 which files are needed for setup and they also add the items *PC/NFS-Pro* under *Add, -Client* in

the Network control panel. Other parts of the setup included disabling the Win95 TCP/IP stack and configuring Pro to use a packet driver but instead of supplying real commands to run the driver, users were to put the words *Echo I am not a packet driver* into the configuration window. I read through all the messages in the PC-NFS forum. Some people got it to work, others didn't. Others suggested alternate NFS clients. I couldn't get it to work! After a day of toil, I decided to reload windows 95 and network software from scratch. Maybe the OEM hadn't loaded it right. Another day spent loading, getting drivers right, and reloading Pro. It still didn't work.

I gave up and then tried an alternatives mentioned on Compuserve, - FTP Software's Interdrive 95. If this one didn't work there were several others mentioned as well. Interdrive95 was found on FTP's web site at <http://www.ftp.com> where they have a section just for evaluation software. I downloaded the file and ran its install program very easily. The only thing Interdrive required was a working TCP/IP stack and uses Win95's built-in one. It gave some instructions on mounting network drives and it worked! I could access a network drive. Absolute elation. I then tried to setup some printers but printing - ha!- was not supported in the beta version. Crippleware?

I tried two other alternates, both free betas. One was Integraph's DiskAccess and the other was Locus Computing's PCI. DiskAccess was easy to install, but sparse on documentation, forcing me to figure out the setup by reading the bug fixes. I was only able to load network drives from a DOS window, but again no printers would load. The Locus product, I was to learn, didn't use the pcnfs software on the Unix end but required its own proprietary NFS server. The cost, \$255. Too much, considering that three name-brand products using the public domain pcnfsd server couldn't do the job. (Note: at this time Locus does have an NFS client which supports the use of pcnfsd. There is a free eval copy at their web site, www.locus.com). So there I was, back at the drawing board. I kept checking Compuserve for any new developments and downloaded everything pertinent from comp.protocols.nfs for some insight into this problem.

I removed my network software and card and tried again. This time I used a previous version PC-NFS 5.1, using DOS TSR's to load the network drivers. And it still didn't work. Probably just as well, because I didn't like having all those TSRs running anyway. I wanted a better solution and I decided I *was* going to get Pro working, whatever it took! I'm not sure what I did differently than the first time out but I did finally get Pro to work. I was able to mount drives and got sporadic printing to occur. However, I did make a big mistake. I setup Dial-Up networking to access the Internet. I wanted 32-bit browsability and I had to setup TCP/IP to do this. Needless to say I lost the ability to use Pro. Setup everything again with no dialup and was not happy. The time for evaluation was over, got a out a purchase order and purchased Interdrive 95 from FTP Software.

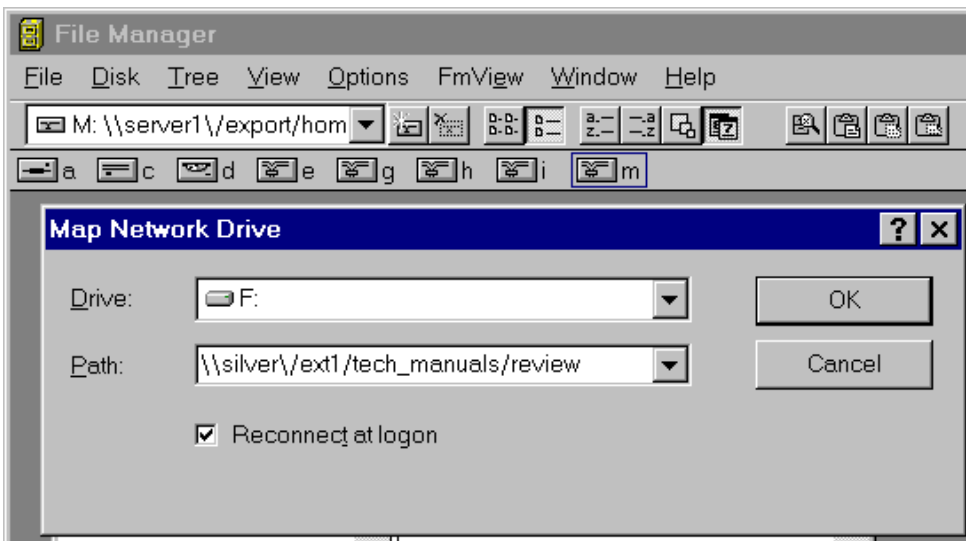
Jim Gets on the Network

This software is really easy to use. It's a subset of a networking suite for Windows 95 called On Net. Interdrive comes on one disk and sets up in minutes. You need to get Microsoft's TCP/IP up and running. You can tell if it's running if you can ping another host on the network. There is an online FAQ available at <http://www.aa.net/~pcd/slp95faq.html> recently updated 19 Nov '95 for setting up your TCP/IP stack as well as an article by Phil Leonard in Issue 8 of *Windo Watch*.

Interdrive 95 has two functions: Mapping Unix file systems to drive letters and defining network printers. Shown below are my Network Configuration and Interdrive 95 property screens.

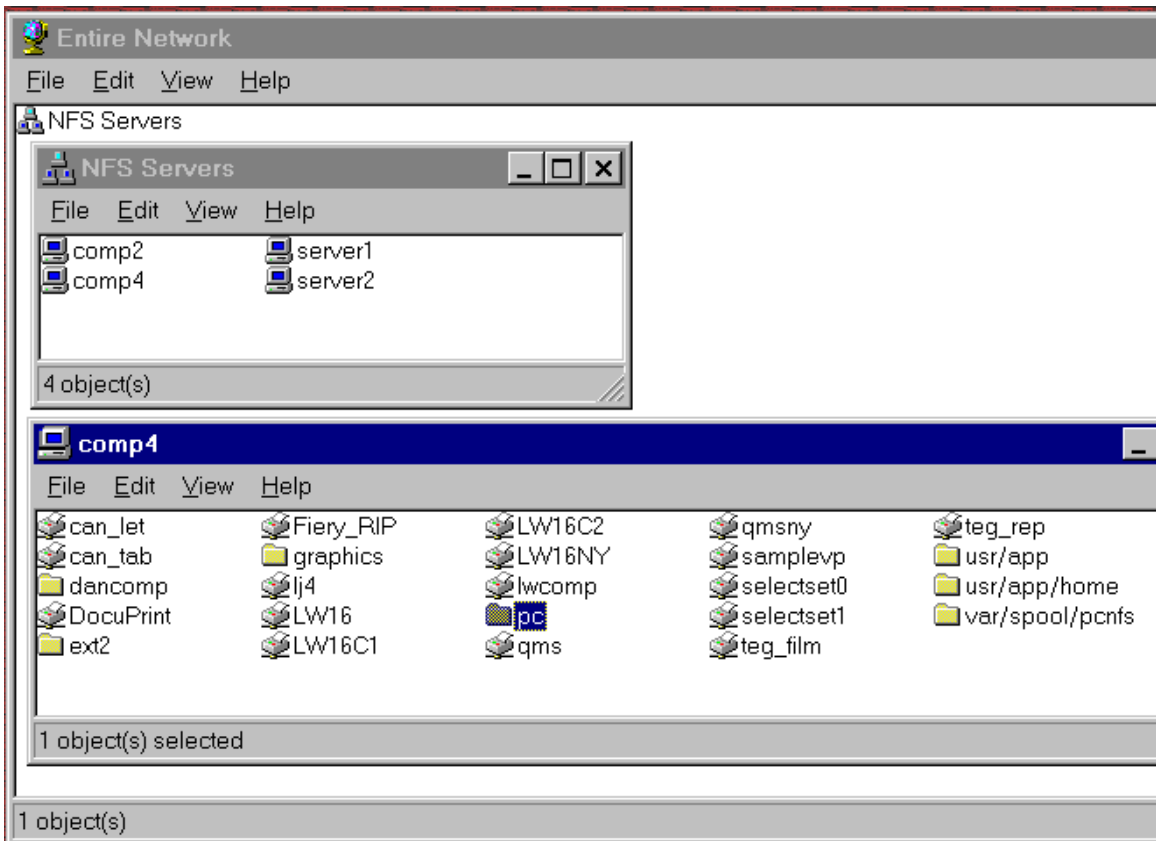
Mapping Unix File Systems

Let's assume that you have a Unix machine with the host name of silver which has a disk partition with a path of /ext1/tech_manuals/review and another path of /export/home/users which you wish to access from your pc. The person in charge of the Unix machine has properly allowed these directories to be shared over the network. There are several ways to mount these directories. I usually do it from the file manager. Under Disk, select Connect Network Drive. You will need to know the directory on the Unix end. Dialog box will present you the next drive letter available to mount. You can select any available drive letter. In the space below the drive letter type in the directory preceded by the Unix host name in this fashion: \\servername\directory\sub-directory. To mount the two directories to drive E: and F: we'd be defining them as \\silver\ext1\tech_manuals\review and \\silver\export\home\users.



Another way to mount Unix directories is via Network Neighborhood. As you browse through the Neighborhood, the Unix machine you select will display its network resources: directories and printers. You can select which directory you want, and map to an available drive

letter. Shown below are my servers with a display of comp4's exported directories and printers.



An interesting item in Network Neighborhood: As you browse your way down to your work, I found that you can access your files there without manually mounting any drives. One problem is that these files can only be accessed with Win 95 applications. I could access a Word document with Word 7 but could not open a WordPerfect 5.1 document or a Pagemaker 5.0 document by double-clicking the document's icon in Network Neighborhood. Nonetheless, it's a decent start!

Connecting to Unix Printers

Connecting to Unix Printers

You can connect Unix printers in various ways: hardwired via serial/parallel cables or networked through Appletalk or TCP/IP protocols. However they are configured on the Unix end, you will see them as printer names in the Network Neighborhood (see screen above). When you double click on a printer in Network Neighborhood, you are asked if you want Windows to setup the printer and if you say Yes, you will start up the same dialog as when you click on Add Printer in the Printers applet of the Control Panel. You will be asked for the path to the network printer. You do so in this fashion: \\servername\printername. If we had a printer called LaserWriter configured on our Unix machine silver, we would type in \\silver\LaserWriter. From there you follow the printer setup as you normally would.

Summary

The lesson to be learned in all of this is that Win95 is new and there isn't a lot of proven system software out there that supports it, - yet! In polling members of the comp.protocols.nfs newsgroup about the PC-NFS/Win95 situation, I found nearly all were in the same boat as myself. There was a lot of hustling about to resolve the situation, and nothing quite worked as well as it should. One suggestion, not tried as yet, was to use a public domain program called Samba. This runs on the Unix end and emulates a Microsoft network server allowing you to use the Win95 Microsoft client. This is on my list. Hopefully, in the next six months we'll see more NFS support for Win95. After all, I'll be upgrading our departmental computers and eventually the company's office machines as well. I need something solid. Hey Bill, why not include a built-in NFS client for Windows 96?

Jim Plumb is a regular *Windo Watch* contributor and the author of many articles including an Acrobat tutorial. He was the original Home Page Editor and literally put *Windo Watch* on the Internet map. He is in the process of being promoted to Systems Administrator for his company. We wish him well!

A Sampling of 32 Bit Windows Software for '95

The In-Touch Sampler for WindoWatch
Copyright 1995 by Lance Jones

This mini digest for WindoWatch is a smattering of interesting, high-quality Win95 32-bit shareware and software recently made available on the World Wide Web. Information is gathered by visiting websites, by monitoring Win95 related newsgroups and by reviewing email from shareware/software developers or other interested parties.

**ALL OF THESE FILES CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE
IN-TOUCH WEBSITE LOCATED AT**

<<http://www.islandnet.com/~sword/digest.html>>

Name: VRWeb For Windows 95

Version: 1.0 Beta 4

Size: 610 Kb

Download Time: Approx. 10 minutes with 14.4 modem

Developed By: Gerbert Orasche, Michael Pichler

Registration: Freeware Beta

File Location: ftp://ftp.utdallas.edu/pub/Hyper-G/VRweb/Windows/vrw_nt.zip

Description: VRWeb is a fresh new entrant into the Virtual Reality Modelling Language browser market. This beta incorporates many of the best features of "WorldView" and "WebSpace", including automatic launching from within Netscape and Mosaic, fly-by, walk, and zoom navigational tools as well as multiple rendering options. Navigation could still be improved, but overall this is a great application.

Name: Forward Mail

Version: 1.0
Size: 1.57 Mb (with VBRUN400.DLL), 148 Kb (without VBRUN400.DLL)
Download Time: Approx. 24 or 3 minutes with 14.4 modem
Developed By: Frank Sidon
Registration: Freeware
File Location:

<ftp://ftp.coast.net/SimTel/win95/sysutil/fwdmail.zip>-(1.5 Mb)

<ftp://ftp.coast.net/SimTel/win95/sysutil/fwdmails.zip> (148 K)

Description: Forward Mail is a small, effective program which scans your E-mail *inbox* for all incoming messages (including faxes or any other MAPI compliant E-mail that lands in the inbox), and forwards it to a person of your choice. This may apply to someone on an internal E-mail system, another fax or any valid MAPI recipient. Nice job, Frank!

Name: Dunce

Version: 1.2

Size: 30 Kb

Download Time: Approx. 45 seconds with 14.4 modem

Developed By: Vector Development

Registration: Freeware

File Location:

<http://www.cjnetworks.com/~vecdev/vector/dunce1.2.zip>

Description: Dunce (Dial-Up Networking Connection Enhancement) allows for much easier dial-up networking than Win95 currently provides. The program will automatically press *connect* for you on the *Connect To* dialog box, redial your Internet Provider indefinitely, even from another app; auto-reconnect if you get unexpectedly dropped.

Lance Jones is the owner and keeper of the [In-Touch Newsletter](#). He's taking the Internet by storm. Watch his smoke!

A Report From Israel

by *Stanley Kanner*

Here in Israel people take to new electronic gizmos as if in a feeding frenzy. It is striking to see the ancient setting of Jerusalem in a surrealistic mix with technology everywhere you look. Hasidim with their long beards, gabardine coats, peayot (curls of hair that never get cut), and cellular phones held to their ears.

I had a meeting with an internet provider, Net Media, two weeks ago. It was at 4pm when suddenly an announcement was made alerting everyone that it was time to stop work in order to have the evening prayer.

Computers are big here... very big! The Ministry of Education has started a program to give every teacher in the country their own PC. There are many educational and just for fun BBSs. Internet providers are springing up left and right and are instituting price wars to get their share of an ever expanding Israeli market. In fact, the Internet seems to be the slice of personal computing most enticing to Israelis. It is talked about as if it were synonymous with computers. Not much different in the US!

There seems to be very little movement towards Windows 95. It doesn't appear that the advertising blitz which was fired up in America occurred here at all. I'm not absolutely sure of this since I arrived in Israel just this past September. My sense, however, is rather low interest and slow movement toward Windows95.

I recently spoke with Itamar Afek who is the Internet Librarian for the Ministry of Foreign affairs. Itamar knows the ins and outs of Windows applications. He has started a side business to set up his customers' computers so that they will be able to do a range of Internet functions (internet phone, etc.). One of the problems Itamar is working on is the use of Hebrew on the web. Without Hebrew fonts loaded in Windows, the aleph bet appears on the screen as garbage characters. Hebrew text can be seen when used as a graphics file, but it is difficult to get links working from these files. Right now Itamar is experimenting with the use of mapping programs. A scan of the Hebrew used on the net shows that nobody has yet been able to perfect the system of links from a Hebrew character set that can be used by computers without the Hebrew fonts.

I have personally had trouble with Hebrew word processors. Not having the Hebrew windows version limits me to a program called Dagesh. Dagesh brags that it has thirty keyboards. This is a bit of an exaggeration, as there really is not a whole lot of difference between British, Australian, Canadian, and American English. Its fonts for Hebrew are limited, and I like the ones that I have on my old DOS Hebrew text editor better. Dagesh also has very limited graphics manipulation. You pretty much stick a graphic somewhere and then decide it's much better to keep it where you originally placed it. Again the unusual mix of the old and new!

Perhaps it is the small size and sense of isolation of this place that drive people out on the net. Surrounded by countries that are at best neutral toward it and at worst openly calling for its destruction, Israelis have always felt confined within the borders of this tiny country. The urge to travel has always been great here. The Internet is the technological extension of that desire.

So, if you meet one of the many Israelis out on the net, the most important Hebrew word to know is Shalom. It means Peace. It is also used for Hello and Good-by. If you want to get more advanced, ken means yes and lo means no. But, for now shalom will do. Shalom!

Stan Kanner is the founder of CompuEd, the online high school. We hope that he continues to provide us with insight into the Israeli society's preoccupation with technology. A number of American chip companies have created an Israeli presence where bleeding edge computer research is taking place.. Stan is a regular WindoWatch writer and can be reached at stankan@netvision.net.il



Jim Plumb Reports on [What's New With Acrobat 2.1?](#)

Whats's new? Mostly good news for people on NT and Sun platforms. The Adobe Acrobat Reader v2.1 can now be run on the following:

SunOS(TM) 4.1.3 & 4.1.4
Sun SPARC Solaris(R) 2.3 & 2.4
Hewlett Packard HP-UX 9.03 and above
Windows NT 3.5 (or later), Windows 3.1, and Windows 95
OS/2 2.11 or later in Windows compatibility mode.

One thing you should know is that release 2.1 does not change the format of PDF files. Exchange and Reader 2.0 can open and view PDF files as before, but some functionality has been added to the Reader to enable some Plug-ins to work with it (see below). At this time I do not know if there is anything new with Exchange or Distiller in Release 2.1. Once I get any information on that I will pass it on.

CONTINUE TO NEXT

The Diversity of 'Twas!

'Twas the Night Before Contributed by Derek Buchler

As written by a technical writer for a firm that does Government contracting...

'Twas the nocturnal segment of the diurnal period preceding the annual Yuletide celebration, and throughout our place of residence, kinetic activity was not in evidence among the possessors of this potential, including that species of domestic rodent known as *Mus musculus*. Hosiery was meticulously suspended from the forward edge of the wood burning caloric apparatus, pursuant to our anticipatory pleasure regarding an imminent visitation from an eccentric philanthropist among whose folkloric appellations is the honorific title of St. Nicholas.

The prepubescent siblings, comfortably ensconced in their respective accommodations of repose, were experiencing subconscious visual hallucinations of variegated fruit confections moving rhythmically through their cerebrums. My conjugal partner and I, attired in our nocturnal head coverings, were about to take slumberous advantage of the hibernal darkness when upon the avenaceous exterior portion of the grounds there ascended such a cacophony of dissonance that I felt compelled to arise with alacrity from my place of repose for the purpose of ascertaining the precise source thereof.

Hastening to the casement, I forthwith opened the barriers sealing this fenestration, noting thereupon that the lunar brilliance without, reflected as it was on the surface of a recent crystalline precipitation, might be said to rival that of the solar meridian itself - thus permitting my incredulous optical sensory organs to behold a miniature airborne runnered conveyance drawn by eight diminutive specimens of the genus Rangifer, piloted by a minuscule, aged chauffeur so ebullient and nimble that it became instantly apparent to me that he was indeed our anticipated caller.

With his ungulate motive power traveling at what may possibly have been more vertiginous velocity than patriotic alar predators, he vociferated loudly, expelled breath musically through contracted labia, and addressed each of the octet by his or her respective cognomen - "*Now Dasher, now Dancer...*" et al. - guiding them to the uppermost exterior level of our abode, through which structure I could readily distinguish the concatenations of each of the 32 cloven pedal extremities.

As I retracted my cranium from its erstwhile location, and was performing a 180-degree pivot, our distinguished visitant achieved - with utmost celerity and via a downward leap - entry by way of the smoke passage. He was clad entirely in animal pelts soiled by the ebony residue from oxidations of carboniferous fuels which had accumulated on the walls thereof. His resemblance to a street vendor I attributed largely to the plethora of assorted playthings which he bore dorsally in a commodious cloth receptacle.

His orbs were scintillant with reflected luminosity, while his sub-maxillarydermal indentations gave every evidence of engaging amiability. The capillaries of his malar regions and nasal appurten-

ance were engorged with blood which suffused the subcutaneous layers, the former approximating the coloration of Albion's floral emblem, the latter that of the *Prunus avium*, or sweet cherry. His amusing sub- and supralabials resembled nothing so much as a common loop knot, and their ambient hirsute facial adornment appeared like small, tabular and columnar crystals of frozen water.

Clenched firmly between his incisors was a smoking piece whose gray fumes, forming a tenuous ellipse about his occiput, were suggestive of a decorative seasonal circlet of holly. His visage was wider than it was high, and when he waxed audibly mirthful, his corpulent abdominal region undulated in the manner of impectinated fruit syrup in a hemispherical container. He was, in short, neither more nor less than an obese, jocund, multigenarian gnome, the optical perception of whom rendered me visibly frolicsome despite every effort to refrain from so being. By rapidly lowering and then elevating one eyelid and rotating his head slightly to one side, he indicated that trepidation on my part was groundless.

Without utterance and with dispatch, he commenced filling the aforementioned appended hosiery with various of the aforementioned articles of merchandise extracted from his aforementioned previously dorsally transported cloth receptacle. Upon completion of this task, he executed an abrupt about-face, placed a single manual digit in lateral juxtaposition to his olfactory organ, inclined his cranium forward in a gesture of leave-taking, and forthwith effected his egress by renegotiating (in reverse) the smoke passage. He then propelled himself in a short vector onto his conveyance, directed a musical expulsion of air through his contracted oral sphincter to the antlered quadrupeds of

burden, and proceeded to soar aloft in a movement hitherto observable chiefly among the seed-bearing portions of a common weed. But I overheard his parting exclamation, audible immediately prior to his vehiculation beyond the limits of visibility: "Ecstatic Yuletide to the planetary constituency, and to that self same assemblage, my sincerest wishes for a salubriously beneficial and gratifyingly pleasurable period between sunset and dawn.

And there's more holiday nonsense. If you don't understand Yiddish, you may not find this funny.

The Night Before Chanukah

'Twas the night before Chanukah, boichiks and maidels
Not a sound could be heard, not even the dreidels
The menorah was set by the chimney alight
In the kitchen, the Bubbie was hopping a bite
Salami, Pastrami, a glaisele tay
And zoyere pickles mit bagels-- Oy vay!

Gezint and geschmock the kinderlach felt
While dreaming of taiglach and Chanukah gelt
The alarm clock was sitting, a kloppin' and tickin'
And Bubbie was carving a shtickele chicken
A tummel arose, like the wildest k'duchas
Santa had fallen right on his tuchas!

I put on my slippers, ains, tzvay, drei
While Bubbie was eating herring on rye
I grabbed for my bathrobe and buttoned my gottkes
And Bubbie was just devouring the latkes

To the window I ran, and to my surprise
A little red yarmulka greeted my eyes.

When he got to the door and saw the menorah
"Yiddishe kinder," he cried, "Kenahorah!"
I thought I was in a Goyishe hoise!
As long as I'm here, I'll leave a few toys."
"Come into the kitchen, I'll get you a dish
Mit a gupel, a leffel, and a shtickele fish."

With smacks of delight he started his fressen
Chopped liver, knaidlach, and kreplach gegessen
Along with his meal he had a few schnapps
When it came to eating, this boy sure was tops
He asked for some knishes with pepper and salt
But they were so hot he yelled out "Gevalt!"

He loosened his hoysen and ran from the tish
"Your koshereh meals are simply delish!"
As he went through the door he said "See y'all later
I'll be back next Pesach in time for the seder!"
So, hutzmir and zeitzmir and "Bleibtz mir gezint"
he called out cheerily into the wind.

More rapid than eagles, his prancers they came
As he whistled and shouted and called them by name
"Come, Izzie, now Moishe, now Yossel and Sammy!

On Oyving, and Maxie, and Hymie and Manny!"
He gave a geshrai, as he drove out of sight
"A gut yontiff to all, and to all a good night!"

And then there were the people who toil every night until dawn:

`T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CRISIS

WW

**`Twas the night before crisis, and all through the house,
Not a program was working, not even a browse.**

**The programmers were wrung out, too mindless to care,
Knowing the chances of cutover hadn't a prayer.**

**The users were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of inquiries danced in their heads.**

**When out in the lobby, there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my tube to see what was the matter.**

**And what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a super programmer, oblivious to fear.**

**More rapid than eagles, his programs they came,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name;**

**On Update! on Add! on Inquiry! on Delete!
On Batch Jobs, on Closing! on Functions Complete!**

**His eyes were glazed over, his fingers were lean,
From weekends and nights in front of a screen.**

**A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.**

**He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
Turning specs into code, then turned with a jerk,**

**And laying his finger on the `ENTER' key,
The system came up and worked perfectly.**

**The Updates, updated, the Deletes, they deleted,
The Inquiries, inquired and the Closing completed.**

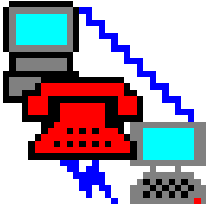
**He tested each whistle, and tested each bell,
With nary an abend, and all had gone well!**

**The system was finished, the tests were concluded.
The client's last changes were even included.**

**And the client exclaimed with a snarl and a taunt,
"It's just what I asked for, but it's not what I want!"**

ANONYMOUS

Musings on Netscape 2.0 and other ponderings....



Reflections of a ModemJunkie

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I've been thinking lately that perhaps I should change the name of this column. I talk about other things from time to time: Everything from new software to the state of the world. And besides, I thought, I'm not really addicted to communications. And then something happened!

I did a little outside work and had a couple of hundred dollars burning a hole in my pocket, and after all, I only had a 14,400 modem. It was a proud possession only a short time ago. Was it really that long ago that I upgraded from 1200 to 2400 bps? So after doing a little, but probably not enough research on line, I began my search for a new modem.

I went to Computer Central, the huge computer flea market at the College of Dupage. But no one had anything under \$200, except for the vendors from Cleveland... After having been burned before I have rule: Never, *NEVER*, buy from a Cleveland vendor unless, of course, you live in Cleveland!

I was determined to buy an external modem because I'm frankly lost without those lights. My choices were between the USR Sportster, the Supra and the Cardinal. Calling around, I found a certain computer mail order house (let's call it "ABC, Co." to protect the innocent) which had the Sportster for \$199. Their home office is in a Chicago suburb where they have a huge showroom. So off I went as it's only a 45 minute drive. No Sportster 28.8s were on the shelf. The sales person said they were out of the Sportsters and offered me a "great buy" on a USR Courier which was, of course, well over my budget. After a few minutes, when he realized that I wasn't going to jump at the Courier, he looked at his computer screen again. It's interesting to note that the customer can see the screen through the glass in the counter, but its too blurry to read from the customer's angle. "I must have been looking at the Macs," he said. "I do have a Sportster in stock."

I didn't know there was a difference between modems for the different platforms. I have switched my old modems between Macs and PCs with no problems. But it wasn't until I got home that I thought I might have just escaped being a victim of a bait and switch. Anyway, he knocked a dollar off of the price and I took the Sportster home for \$198 or \$2 below budget. Perhaps the difference is in the free software in the box not in the modem... Would it really have made a difference if I got Mac disks for America Online, C\$erve, Genie, and Netcom to add to my DOS/WIN coaster collection?

As soon I got home I hooked it up, logged on to the Internet and found the comp.dcomp.modems news group which is something I should have done first. Guess what? That afternoon USR announced a firmware upgrade for the Sportster (V.34+ 33,600). I quickly learned I hadn't asked the right questions either. I had asked if

the Sportster was upgradable, I didn't specify flash ROM. So here I was with a brand new modem... and already it was out of date.

USR was making the new chip available for \$25 and shipping. I called first thing Monday morning. Tech support hadn't even heard about it yet, but assured me they could ship overnight. They wouldn't let me pick it up at the plant in Skokie which is only half as far from my house as is ABC. "Let me think about it," I said. After all, with shipping it would now be \$30 over my budget while later purchasers would find the new chip installed without being required to pay extra for the chip. And besides, some contributors to the usenet group had already found that they had purchased boxes with the new chip off the shelf-- there is no way to tell from the box. I felt rooked. But I gave in.. after all I wanted the latest and the fastest.

So I called back.. forty minutes to get through (that's what speaker phones are for), only to learn that the overnight delivery had now turned into at least a thirty day wait. Heck, I could return my unit and wait a month and probably buy it off the shelf by then. So I said no. I'll stick it out.

Most of my connections seemed to be at around 21 or 24 k. Even though the carrier rate never reached 28.8, transfer rates were going much faster than before. I was also learning just how much time on the Internet is spent waiting for something to happen on someone else's server. Faster modems can't change that. Remember how your floppy drives seemed to slow down as you got faster processors? The faster transfer rates just exaggerate the waiting time on the Net.

For a week I played and tuned, trying different initialization strings to see if I could get faster data transmissions with greater frequency. I was determined to go back to the store on Friday and trade for a new machine. Maybe by then the new faster chip would have reached the shelves.

Friday morning, before returning to ABC, I tried one more change to my Telix communications program setup. Voila!! After five years of uninterrupted use of Telix, except to upgrade, I had blown the config. It would no longer connect. Sometimes it wouldn't even dial. What had I done?

Frustrated by my inability to regularly connect at 28.8 and now having trashed my old DOS friend, I went back to ABC... But they didn't have any Sportsters in stock. They didn't have the Supra either (due in a week, they said). But there was the Cardinal for only \$164 and it was flash rom upgradable. (BTW: ABC was very cooperative on the trade in...I may have to take back those thoughts about the bait and switch.)

So I have \$38 in my pocket (including refunded sales tax) and the Cardinal is hooked up. It is flash upgradable, but there is no sign that Cardinal is going to go upgrade again at this time. The unit I bought already has the latest upgrade. So what good does the flash do me?

Unfortunately the Cardinal uses a slightly different version of the Hayes command set so I have spent several days trying to find the right modem string. My SLIP connection to the Internet is fine but I haven't been able to get Telix functioning yet. Fortunately, the Sysop on my home BBS (Chicago Syslink) has something called Banana Com online for quick download. I had

recently d/d a copy for a friend. It's a simple com program-- already configured to dial Syslink.. So I can get through again and play BBS King. But its been frustrating.

Should Powell have withdrawn? Should Gingrich and Clinton be taken to the woodshed for the poker game they played with the budget? I don't know. There are more important questions in the world. Should I have waited for the upgrade chip.. or saved my money for the Courier, or waited for the Supra with the helpful external display? These are the earth shaking questions.

Did I say I was thinking of changing the name of this column?? Maybe I was premature. And did I tell you?? My last connect was at 28.8!?. Now if only I could make that constant...and if only I could get Telix connecting again.

After completing the first draft of this column, I tried some alternative phone numbers from my ISP. At two of the sites I now regularly connect at 28.8. If I had tried those at first, I probably would have been satisfied with the Sportster.

As to Telix, I finally deleted the telix.cnf file and reopened the app. I don't know what I had done wrong but it's working again. Whew!! Now I can get some sleep. But wait-- today I received notice of a Telix upgrade to v.3.5 from DeltaCom...

See you online...

Leonard Grossman is a lawyer for the Department of Labor. He is a regular WindoWatch contributor and can be reached at leonard.grossman@mcs.com Leonard makes the rest of us feel much better about our own puny computing skills.

The great service he performs is by making the rest of us heave a sigh of relief for not being the lone knucklehead left in the online world. All of this has a too familiar ring!

Web Surfing Anyone?

Copyright 1995 by *Ben M. Schorr*

If you're reading this column you are obviously already familiar with the underlying concepts of on-line communication. There has been a lot of talk in recent months about the future of the Internet, particularly as it relates to the proposed \$500 *Internet-Box* that some people are seeing as the future wave of Internet computing.

Until fairly recently, today in fact, I was one of those people who firmly believed that in the not-terribly-distant future we would see a proliferation of cheap boxes with monitors, modems and mice that we would use from our homes, and some offices, to access and *surf* the web. Various applications being provided via the Internet on a subscription basis, perhaps even a link to your local Kinko's to do full custom and color printing of your documents thusly created.

However, today I ran head first into what I believe will be the greatest obstacle to the Internet's success as a global network for serving more than basic information. In a word it is *BANDWIDTH*. Yes, as I sat here at my desk waiting for a connection to Yahoo...and waiting...and waiting (and playing a spirited game of Solitaire while I was waiting) it took literally more than five minutes before I finally gave up and went to do something else, but nearly everywhere I turned I found sluggish response. I have a machine well suited to Web surfing (a Pentium with 16M of RAM, accelerated video card and 28.8Kbps

modem) but still I found the poor performance unbearable. I certainly don't see people enduring that to receive applications or more than basic information.

If the web is going to be truly useful it has to be reliable and that means that when you click on a link you shouldn't have to wait more than a minute or so at the MOST to get your connection and be ready to move through that page.

Now don't get me wrong; I use the Internet on a daily basis. I send and receive E-Mail in huge quantities, I regularly go to Web and FTP sites to get information from vendors and download the latest patches and drivers. But rarely is that a time critical circumstance. If the response is sluggish I can wait or call back later. If, on the other hand, I get my Word Processor from Lotus via on-line subscription, that sluggishness will be unavoidable and intolerable.

The critical word is **bandwidth**. We need to find and expand upon ways to deliver Internet access more rapidly. We need to continue the growth of ISDN deployment. In fact, those \$500 boxes may need to have a \$750 big brother with an ISDN connection. We need to continue to develop more robust and powerful Web servers and Web server software.

Smart Design Anyone?

Part of the problem is that some web pages aren't very intelligently designed. There are still a lot of people using 14.4Kbps modems for access and to force them to download huge graphics is to discourage them from accessing the net at all. Even at 28.8Kbps there are some pages that take forever and longer to load.

The design solution is to use less graphics. Keep them simple, don't

use every color in the palette and *test your pages*. Insert Text Links for those who just want to navigate the page quickly without waiting for the 80K JPEG of your new office building to load. Give the user the option of seeing the graphics or not. When you test your page, test it with a 14.4Kbps modem and a moderately configured PC with just 8M of RAM, an ISA video card, etc. Make sure the pages load within an acceptable period of time.

More Design Tips

E-Mail is a fabulous tool. I use it whenever possible to communicate with vendors and manufacturers as well as friends and clients. It never ceases to amaze me that companies will deploy elaborate web pages with no obvious way to send them E-Mail. Insert a link so that the user can click on it and send you a quick E-Mail message. Make it easy to find, perhaps at the bottom of each page.

If you have an FTP server, consider having a README file in each directory that gives a one or two line description of what each file in the directory is. Don't expect users to know that 121HGTP4.EXE is your company's latest video driver for Windows95.

Consider posting links to companies that provide complimentary products and services. Ask them to return the favor.

If you have a special section for limited access, make the process of registering for that section easy and make the verification process reliable. A major computer magazine requires you to be a print subscriber to gain access to their on-line forums. I am a print subscriber and after completing what seemed like an easy registration process I was chagrined to discover that my numerous attempts to enter the forums were only successful just *twice*. The rest of the time

the system returned an error indicating that my username and/or password were incorrect. Occasionally it will return that error before even prompting me to ENTER my information and then leaves me with no way to enter it!

I type this username and password pretty often, so it's unlikely that I could make that many mistakes on it. More likely, I think that their security measures are just unreliable. To date, E-mail sent to that publication trying to get the issue resolved has met with only a lukewarm response.

The Internet is a great tool with a lot of promise, but we're already starting to run ourselves into the ground with it. As usage increases and the graphic designers start taking control away from the computer people, the web is going to get slower and more cumbersome. Prettier, yes. But slow; and I've played about all of the Solitaire that I really care to today.

If you have any design tips for web pages or pages that you either love or hate, drop me a note at ben.schorr@bcsbbs.com-

Ben Schorr is the Host of the Ilink Consultants conference and the Director of Operations of Watson/Schorr Consulting of Canoga Park, CA . Ben's consulting practice keeps him very close to what is happening and being said on the street. He is a regular contributor to [Windo Watch](#).