COMPUTER CONNECTION
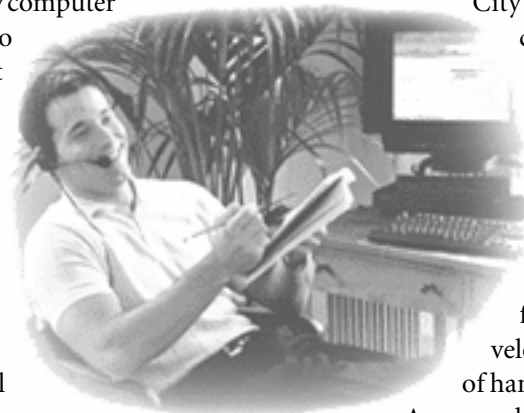
LOOK, MA, NO HANDS! IBM'S VOICE RECOGNITION

It's been some years since IBM came to call at one of our meetings. But whenever they do, we get to watch a really professional demonstration of some very interesting software. This time it's IBM's ViaVoice Gold, a new voice recognition program that goes a long way toward realizing every computer user's dream—no more typing, no more clicking, no more menus, just say what you want the computer to do, or tell it in your natural voice what you want it to say.

IBM has been working to improve speech recognition for years. VoiceType, a very expensive business-oriented IBM program, had … us…dictating …like…this. Simply Speaking, a leaner home and small office application, still…forced…us… to…dictate…like...this.

Now there's ViaVoice Gold, that can recognize what we say whenwetalklikethis, with normal speech rhythms. ViaVoice lets us dictate documents and operate our computers "no hands." (Well, we still have to push the Power On button.)

ViaVoice Gold's accuracy is amazing, compared to its ancestors. You'll want to be on hand for IBM's demonstration. It's a preview of where our personal computing is heading. ∎

MEETING SCHEDULE
Rockland Conservatory of Music 7:30 P.M.

Tuesday, November 11 – IBM's ViaVoice

Tuesday, December 9 – Microsoft Road Show

Tuesday, January 13 – Citibank Direct Access

(All are welcome)

New Users Group Begins

As we went to press, the eagerly-awaited New Users group was scheduled to have its first meeting on November 6 at the New City Library. This special class for those new to computing will run for eight months—one session per month. The group's leader, Sondra (Sandy) Coulter, RPCUG vice president, still remembers the time, not so long ago, when she was herself a "beginner." She understands how lost and "at sea" one can feel when confronted with new technology. Participants in the New Users Group will find Sandy an enthusiastic teacher who has developed a comprehensive curriculum with plenty of handouts and down-to-earth explanations.

Anyone who wishes to participate (enrollment is limited) needs to contact Sandy at 446-3444. ∎

Vote on Dues Proposal

A proposal for a dues change, discussed at the September meeting and published in the October newsletter, will be put to a vote at the November meeting. The proposal, if approved by the members attending, would mean that annual individual, joint and family memberships would be increased to $35, $40, and $45 dollars respectively. Student memberships and corporate sponsorships would remain at their present levels.

Current members will have the opportunity to renew or extend their memberships for an additional year at the old rates until December 1, 1997. After that time, new memberships and renewals would be at the higher rates.

The increase is necessary because our operating expenses exceed our income. See the income and expenses rundown on page 9. Be with us on November 11 to cast your vote. ∎

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Stan Smith

Condolences

RPCUG founder Peter Bellin's wife, Susan, succumbed to a heart attack recently. We extend our most sincere condolences to Peter and the Bellin family.

Membership Surveys

The member survey mentioned in last month's column will take place at our November meeting. We are asking for your guidance and thoughts regarding the contents of our monthly meeting s, their format, etc., and about volunteering to assist our group.

If you are asked to fill out a survey, please take the one or two minutes required to fill it out. As an incentive, an extra raffle ticket will be handed to you when you return the completed form. Please let us know how you feel.

New Users SIG

The time has finally arrived. We are starting the second edition of our New Users (Beginners) Special Interest Group on Thursday, November 6, at 7:15 P.M. at the New City Library.

If you are interested in attending this set of eight monthly sessions covering the basic information that all new computer users need, contact SIG leader Sandy Coulter at 446-3444.

RPCUG Dues Increase

At our November meeting we will vote on a motion to approve an increase in our membership dues. This increase is necessary to enable RPCUG to continue to provide the current level of services to our members.

Your board of directors asks your support for this important motion.

Details regarding the motion are outlined on page 1 of this newsletter. Also, read the following item in my column to see what other steps we are taking to insure our continued financial health.

Newsletter Advertising

If you look at page 11 of this month's **ComputerConnection**, you will see a new addition. We are aggressively pursuing advertising opportunities to defray some of the costs of producing our award-winning newsletter.

We are anticipating having a full page of advertisements in each issue. The advertisements may or may not be related to computing. Advertising reduces our out-of-pocket expenses for publishing and mailing **ComputerConnection.**

Be sure to peruse the advertisements. And, most importantly, consider using the services and products of our advertisers. They are supporting RPCUG; we need to support them. When you contact them, be sure to let our advertisers know that you saw their notices in **Computer-Connection.** Without positive feedback that their advertisements are producing additional business, they will not continue to advertise with us. So let them know you are doing business with them because they are supporting RPCUG.

Our Wonderful Volunteers

This month we feature volunteer Jane Treubig. Jane had an interest, saw a need and responded. She volunteered for,

started, and led the Communications SIG. Then she set up our RPCUG BBS, taught herself how to run the Mustang software and became SysOp. She donated the use of one of her computers, a modem, and a telephone line for the BBS. She didn't even seek to recover her out-of-pocket monthly telephone costs. She has also produced and presented several meeting programs, maintained our e-mail list and written for **ComputerConnection.** Having been so very active in the last three years, Jane now needs to have a (brief, we hope) rest from her intense involvement with RPCUG. We look forward to seeing her at upcoming meetings and hope that she will replenish her computer energies quickly.

I frequently ask Richard Montgomery, one of our senior, senior members, to assist in the folding, mailing and stamping of our newsletter. He always says, "Yes, when should I pick up everything, and when does it need to be mailed?" He is always willing to help out. He has also donated several pieces of useful computer hardware and software to RPCUG. Some of you raffle winners have benefited from Richard's generosity.

Thanks, Jane and Richard, for your helping spirit, and for a job well done.

Meeting Notes

Parsons Technology's Matt McCann didn't disappoint us in October. He arrived with his laptop computer full of interesting, intriguing, and useful Parsons software titles. And he left offering our RPCUG meeting attendees significant user group discounts—some exceeding 50% of the suggested retail price—on scores of products. And we did see the latest version of Parsons' Atomic Clock, although it still didn't have tide tables for the fishermen (or should it be

THE EDITOR'S DESK

by Sy Ribakove

I'm ticked off over the disparity between the size of today's software boxes and what's inside when we open them. I received a fat package yesterday only to discover that it contained only a skinny Getting Started Guide, a sealed envelope containing a CD, and two postcards: one for registering the software, the other for requesting the software on floppies.

The rest of the box was filled with cardboard, cleverly folded to keep the meager contents from rattling around.

A few days earlier a somewhat more modest package had arrived. Inside, I discovered a Styrofoam sandwich: two thick white pieces of plastic cradling a CD in a white windowed envelope and a registration card. No manual, naturally.

I remember the days when a hefty software box contained a half pound of 3.5″ and 5.25″ floppies , an installation guide, a thick manual or two, a shower of discount coupons for the manufacturer's other offerings, and a bright red flyer proclaiming READ ME FIRST.

Is today's packaging just bulk for the sake of bulk? I think not. I believe it's done for the same reason that stores continue to price goods at $x.99. (Can there still be people who will purchase an item for $4.99 and walk away if it costs five bucks?)

The assumption is that we are too brainwashed to realize that we are being manipulated, and that we don't mind opening a two-pound box to find little more than air and packing material inside.

License agreements

Just as I deplore the town speed limits of 30 m.p.h., which makes lawbreakers of us all, I resent the software installation programs that want me to swear that I have read the licensing gobbledegook that comes with every new program. You either scroll down and let your eyes glaze over reading this gibberish or, guiltily, you click the Next button and get on with the installation. In the case of the posted town speed limit, I am able to express my road rage lawfully by slowing down to exactly thirty when I catch sight of a police car cruising behind me, especially at 2 A.M. and if I'm on the lightly traveled causeway over the reservoir between New City and Congers. I know they hate going thirty.

As for the scrollable license agreement, I am not so incensed that I am willing to break the law by sharing valuable software with friends. I do, however, click on the scrollbar to set the license agreement rolling by on the screen and then I exact my revenge—I don't watch. Hah! ∎

TO THE EDITOR:

I attended the Parsons Technology presentation last month and, as an attorney, feel obligated to express a strong warning regarding the creation of computer-generated wills. The document may be beautiful and well-written, but unless it is executed properly (signature, witnesses and certain other formalities), it will be worthless and void. Virtually no other legal document requires the exacting formality of a will.

Therefore, anyone wishing to have a valid will should have a licensed attorney supervise its execution. When it comes to wills, "self-help" is a recipe for disaster.

Michael D. Diederich, Jr., Attorney at Law
Stony Point

[Ed: The Quicken Family Lawyer presenter also recommended that the software be used only as a means of becoming familiar with documents such as wills prior to consulting an attorney.]

PAGIS PRO 97

by Steve Weinberg

I am fascinated by programs that can scan paper documents, convert them to graphic images and then convert the graphic images to text that can be edited and manipulated in a word processing program. This is a magical sequence that can truly be a time saver for those of us who need to turn paper documents into computer files.

In **Pagis Pro 97**, Xerox has packaged software that accomplishes several other tasks to assist with the management of paper-based and computer-based documents. You get excellent tools for making the most of the scanner attached to your system. You can scan to print, scan to fax, perform OCR (Optical Character Recognition), annotate and mark, extract text and images and, interestingly, index, search and retrieve all the docu-

ments on your system. Most of this functionality is available via drag-and-drop. It is also easily accessible from the Windows 95 Start button.
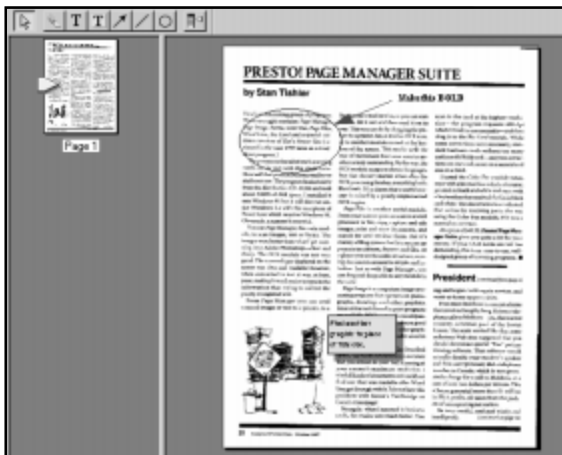
Indexing and Retrieval

Do you ever forget, as I have many times, where you stored some bit of information that you now had a pressing need to find? **Pagis Pro's** indexing module allowed me to find documents based on my own search criteria; it also automatically indexed new documents as soon as I created them. Eureka! I even found things that I should have discarded long ago. Trashed them!

Annotation, Markup, etc.

I scanned a page of last month's **ComputerConnection**. Once it was on my screen I annotated it by adding a movable yellow sticky note. Then I added an arrow and put a circle around a text block. This, I thought, would be great for marking up a draft

document and sending it, electronically or printed, to the person responsible for finalizing it. At this point, the document was still an image—a series of dots on my screen. **Pagis Pro** did a good job of separating graphics from text portions of the image when the pictures were in neat, rectangular areas, but not so well when the graphic had text tightly wrapped around it.

Optical Character Recognition

Now, for the fascinating OCR transformation. OCR is the process of identifying the patterns of dots in an image and translating those patterns into letters or numbers that correspond to the original typed text. All I had to do was drag or open the image in the TextBridge Pro module. It took about one minute to convert a single page to my word processor's format (there were several to choose from). Most of the characters were properly identified, but some of the words were crowded together without a space between them. Not to worry, the spell checker highlighted all of these so that I could insert the appropriate spaces. I tried the training mode (which worked well) to pick up those unidentified dot patterns and remembered the dot patterns for subsequent occurrences. It could then translate the same pattern into the letter or letters of my choice. Some patterns, such as the ff in muffler, are difficult when typeset with certain fonts and italicized. Keep in mind that OCR works best with clear, clean original text. It quickly degrades as the quality of the source document diminishes.

Xerox's new XIF format stores document images in a very compressed format. This saves disk space and makes storing images easier. The company even provides a free viewer for XIF files (downloadable at Xerox's Web site) for those without **Pagis Pro** who need to view XIF files produced by others.

The **Pagis Pro 97** package is easy to use. Installation was fairly uncomplicated, but not totally without its pitfalls. My particular scanner was not supported, but most program functions were still available, if not entirely automated. The list of supported scanners is quite extensive and growing all the time. New drivers are available on the Web. Xerox is even willing to notify users by e-mail when new scanners are added. There is a helpful manual, and a slick and generally informative CD-based multimedia tutorial.

This top performing package is well worth its $89.99 retail price. Performance on my Pentium 60 was reasonable, but I wouldn't want to run the program with much less than that level of CPU power. **Pagis Pro 97** is strictly for Windows 95 or NT; it requires 16MB RAM, 25MB hard disk space, a CD-ROM and, of course, a scanner. ∎

INFO SELECT 4.0

by Sy Ribakove

"Where'd I put that phone number?" "What was the name of that book my son wanted to borrow?" "Where did I see that software review?" "Which people was I supposed to call back?" "What errands do I need to do today?"

The trouble with mainstream databases and Personal Information Managers (PIMs) is that the things I want to remember are not easily tucked into fields or entered onto calendars. For instance: Many mornings, as I fix my breakfast, a song I haven't heard or thought of in fifty years pops into my head—*Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet* or *Six Lessons From Madam LaZonga* or *I Got a Gal in Kalamazoo*—and I want to remember it so that I can play "name that tune" with my wife. But I know that if I try to recall the song fifteen minutes later without writing the title down I will fail, and if I scribble the title on a scrap of paper, I'll lose the scrap or not be able to decipher my own handwriting. So I rush to the computer where **Info Select** awaits (I have it set to load automatically when my computer boots up), type G for Get, and S-O-N-G to bring up my list of remembered songs, and add the title to my cumulative list.

Or let's say that I'm at the computer and Jack Whozzit calls and, for the life of me, I can't remember who Jack Whozzit is. Again, I type G for Get, and by the time I've typed W-H-O-Z, Jack's title, company, address, phone number, and a summary of our conversation last time he called is on my screen, even before I've finished saying, "Hello, Jack, what can I do for you?"

Some reviewers have found fault with **Info Select** for the very same reasons that I love it. Its unstructured paradigm fits my own way of thinking. Ideas for articles, spur-of-the-moment insights about helping my piano students, random thoughts, opinions, notions, impressions, dreams, questions for doctors—whatever my mind can produce—can all be entered into **Info Select** without giving a moment's thought to the item's structure.

Info Select's glory has always been its search engine, crisp and quick. I just have to think and **Info Select** pops the information I want right onto my screen. When I need an address for a business letter, envelope or label, I type G, a few letters of the person's name, highlight the name and address, copy it to the Clipboard (Ctrl-C) and paste it (Ctrl-V) into my waiting document.

For users who want some way to organize their scraps of information, **Info Select's** optional left hand Selector panel offers drag and drop functionality, displaying window captions in outline form. (Lacking an assigned caption, **Info Select** automatically quotes the first line of the data entry.)

Users will find lots of goodies tucked away in the basic installation—a configurable calendar complete with ticklers, lots of templates (shipping label, phone message, purchase order and many more) and the ability to make **Info Select** look and behave like any previous version (I really appreciate that one: I've been using **Info Select** since DOS days and can continue to use my familiar keyboard single letter commands).
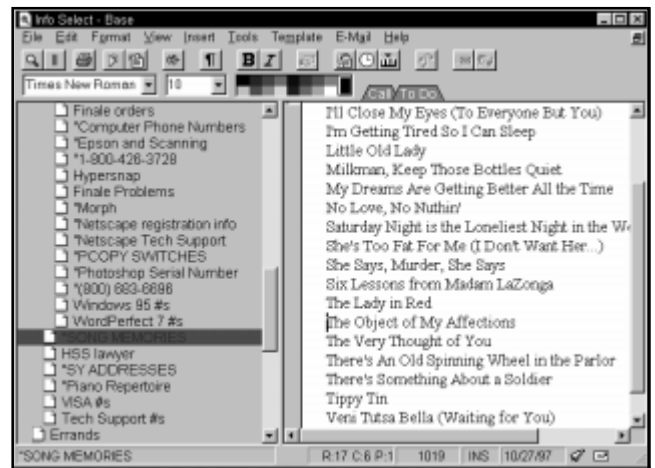
I also like the fileless word processing capability—no longer do I have to invent a file name to find the information I want.

Micro Logic, responding to some user dissatisfaction with the previous version, has made **Info Select 4.0** simpler and far easier to strip down to one's personal favorite functionality. I have found its usefulness limited only by my ability to think up new ways to use it. But **Info Select's** strength remains its unique ability to store and instantly recall random information or fleeting thoughts, and manage all this information (no matter in what order or shape it is entered) better than any other program can.

Street price: $100. Minimally requires a 486-based PC or better, 8MB RAM, 4MB hard disk space, Windows 95 or Windows NT 3.51 or later. ■

TZ-Link, a Rockland County full Internet Service Provider, offers a 10% discount to RPCUG members. There is a two-week trial period during which service can be cancelled without charge. For information and to obtain the discount phone 623-1720.

AND KEEP IN MIND

November

  6   New Users Group; 7:15–8:45 P.M., New City Library
 11   General Meeting; IBM's ViaVoice Gold; 7:30 P.M.
 13   Investment SIG; 7 P.M.; UCS, 1st Floor., 25 Smith St., Nanuet
 16   Computer Fair; 10 A.M.–3 P.M.; Holiday Inn, Suffern
 18   Windows 95 SIG; 7–9 P.M.; Pearl River Library
 19   OS/2 SIG; 7:30 P.M.; 634-6618 for directions

FRUIT FLIES LIKE BANANAS

by Ken Blake, president TCS

How I wish there were a decent grammar checker available! Not that I'm bad at grammar, but I'm certainly capable of making mistakes. A good grammar checker would catch my grammatical errors, as well as lots of typos (like "two" for "too") that a spelling checker can't.

I use WordPerfect 7, which includes Grammatik. Grammatik is probably as good a grammar checker as there is, but as far as I'm concerned, it falls far short. Besides failing to catch some real gaffes, it flags so many spurious errors that it's simply more trouble than its worth.

Here are a few examples of what Grammatik had to say about an article I wrote recently about computers and the year 2000:

not grammar checking; that's telling me that in this case it's unable to do grammar checking, and I should do it myself. A reliable grammar checker would know whether or not it was a complete sentence.

In the sentence "Although much of it dates back to the COBOL era, and some even earlier, it's really independent ..." Grammatik complained about the word "even," telling me that the *verb* "even" usually takes an object. Of course "even" wasn't used here as a verb at all.

Grammatik looked at the sentence "The vast majority of programs written in the 1960's and 1970's, and many written even later, were written to handle files with two-byte year fields," and complained about my use of the passive voice,

and 1970's, and many written even later." Grammatik missed this completely.

Accurate parsing of sentences by software is extremely difficult—perhaps impossible. I think that anyone who wrote an algorithm (just the procedure, not the program code) to do this, would become an instant millionaire.

Why is the task so formidable? First, many English words can function as different parts of speech; for example, the word "reform" can serve as a verb, a noun or an adjective. Second, English sentences can be compound or complex, with clauses strewn everywhere. Software would require a degree of artificial intelligence not yet realized to find its way through this maze.

Even a simple sentence can be ambiguous. Remember the sentence that forms the title of this article, "Fruit flies like bananas"? What does it mean?

It could mean that fruit flies (the insects) enjoy eating bananas. It could also mean that fruit (apples, oranges, etc.) is able to move through the air the same way that bananas do. In the first reading, "like" is the sentence's verb; in the second, "flies" is the verb.

"Fruit flies like bananas" is a simple four-word sentence but, as we have seen, it is possible to read it in two very different ways. The correct meaning can only be ascertained by reading the sentence in context. If the sentence were found in a book about insects, there would be little question of its meaning.

No current software does an adequate job of taking a sentence's context into consideration. Will software ever get grammar checking right? I believe that even though accuracy may improve, it will be some time before grammar checkers are worth the space they take up on our hard drives. ■

Reprinted from the Journal of the Tucson Computer Society. The author also edits the Journal.
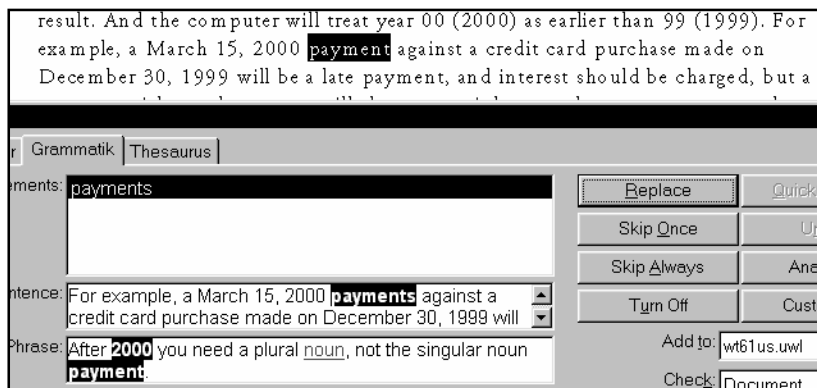
In the sentence "For example, a March 15, 2000 payment against a credit card purchase..." Grammatik told me that "payment" should be "payments," since there should be a plural noun after "2000."

In the sentence "A program with two-byte years will almost certainly treat the payment as an early one," Grammatik advised that I should omit the word "certainly." If I had done that, I would have completely changed the meaning of the sentence.

Of the sentence "What programs does it affect?" Grammatik said, "This may not be a complete sentence." That's

suggesting that the sentence should read "They wrote that the vast majority handled files with two-byte year fields." In this case, Grammatik had totally misunderstood the structure of the sentence as I wrote it, and suggested a "correction" that meant something else entirely.

These last three examples illustrate how feeble Grammatik is at parsing sentences. To parse a sentence is to analyze it and determine each word's part of speech and the function it plays in a sentence. In the final example above, the subject of the sentence is the long phrase "The vast majority of programs written in the 1960's

DISK MANAGER 2.0

by C. Wendler

Yes, the kids were at it again and my hard disk was filled with games and gimmicks.

Thus, a new hard drive was in order, one that I could partition, with most parts for me and one part for them. So, I purchased a new hard drive with four times the capacity of the old overflowing unit.

But how to divide and conquer, how to take my single drive, and partition it into separate but interconnected virtual drives? And how would I, a near beginner with this PC stuff, install, divide and make functional a single new hard drive?

Ontrack's **Disk Manager 2.0** told me not only what tools I needed to physically install a new IDE or SCSI drive, but also how to partition it the way I wanted. It also told me how to enhance my Windows 3.1*x* installation and accelerate data transfers with my IDE drive. Best of all, **Disk Manager** allowed me to consider operation with concurrent multiple operating systems such as OS/2 Warp, Windows 95 and NT, as well as, essential for me, DOS and Windows 3.*x*.
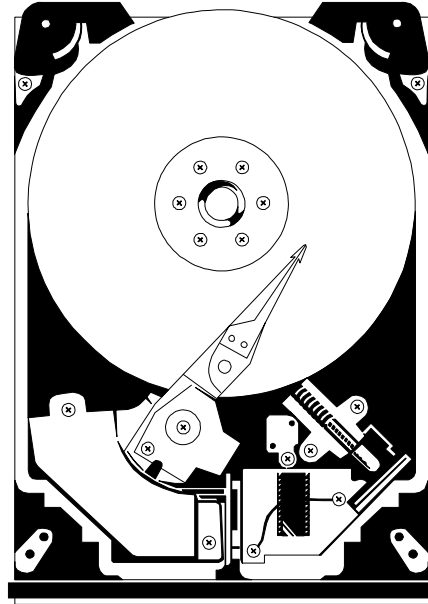
Instructions were provided for both DOS and Windows. The DOS version must be used if you are installing a single new drive (as I was) to replace an older one. For add-on physical drives, **Disk Manager** told me, Windows was much easier to deal with. Either way, there were plenty of instructions.

And they worked as advertised. But—

Never assume that a lack of complexity in a program's advertising means that the program is simple to use. Simple for whom? The directions seemed easy to use, the physical installation was indeed swift, and all the other goodies were really there—FAT16 and FAT32 support, support for drives up to 8GB, the ability to remap drive letters and move data. But for a novice like myself, barely familiar with PC buzz words and techniques, only after some false starts did it actually become easy.

For example; I first chose "special" as my choice for the number of partitions desired. Novice that I am, I became confused while following the bouncing-ball screen instructions. The program kept asking me how large "volume 3" should be, and I interpreted this to mean not what partition number, but actually what hard drive (I was looking for words that pertained to a drive number or a letter, not volume number). Now I know that these are one and the same. Another area for confusion was the repeated question of FAT16 versus FAT32 installation. Although the printed manual referred many times to these high cholesterol items, I never found adequate explanations for them. I chose the default recommended FAT16, and it worked.

I now have the equivalent of a four drive system. Drive C: is the primary (all PC's need a C:) with Windows, Word, and other ancillary home programs. Drive D: is for what I bring home from the office for work with OS/2, my other operating system. A small E: is for e-mail and the Internet, leaving F: for the rest of the family. Perfect.

If you are adding or replacing a hard drive, and don't want to call in a PC professional, I highly recommend **Disk Manager**. If I could succeed, it must really be easy. ■

Elementary, my dear...
or
Do You Know?

We'd love to hear your definitions of these common computer terms and will print the best answers to any of the following:

(The original computer bug)

What does default mean?
What is a utility?
What is a Macro?
What is a batch file?
What is a peripheral?
Why are slanted fonts called italic?
What is a Fatal Error?
What's the difference between analog and digital ?

Address your responses to the editor, *syriba@earth.execnet.com.* You may attach a text file to your e-mail message.

FLASH: FOR TECHIES ONLY?

from Kingston Technology

The following article is excerpted, with permission, from Kingston Technology's "Memory Bits."

What is flash memory?

Flash memory is a solid-state, nonvolatile, rewriteable memory that works like RAM and a hard-disk drive combined. Flash memory stores bits of electronic data in memory cells, just like DRAM and SRAM, but flash also works like a hard disk because when the power is turned off, the data stays in memory. Flash memory is becoming increasingly popular for portable computing and communications applications.

Here are a few reasons why:
- ☞ nonvolatile storage—retains data even with the power off (much like a disk drive)
- ☞ low voltage—consumes little power and saves battery life
- ☞ durability—able to withstand severe shock or vibration without losing data
- ☞ compact size—suitable for a broad range of portable electronics
- ☞ speed—extremely fast access time

What's the difference between flash memory and RAM?

Flash memory and RAM look very much the same. Both can come in the form of discrete chips, modules, or memory cards. They store information in the same way, but flash memory doesn't need to be constantly refreshed like DRAM, and it doesn't need constant power to retain data like SRAM. Flash memory is nonvolatile, which means that it retains its data even when the power is turned off.

The question is sometimes raised: "If flash works like RAM but it doesn't need power to retain data, why not use flash to replace main memory in computers?"

There are several reasons why this can't be done. The memory cells in a flash chip have a limited life span of 100,000 write cycles. Also, because of its design, flash memory must be erased in blocks of data rather than single bytes like RAM. (That's like having to erase an entire word every time you press the Delete key, instead of erasing a single letter.) Beyond that, flash memory is too expensive to compete with RAM for main memory.

What's the difference between flash memory and hard-disk drives?

Magnetic disk drives have moving parts and thus a lower tolerance for shock, vibration, extreme temperatures, or harsh environments. Electronic flash drives have no moving parts to draw excess current, so they consume less energy yet are smaller and faster than hard-disk drives. Flash memory can also withstand shocks up to 2000 G's without losing data. That's roughly equivalent to a ten-foot drop onto concrete. Also, with no physical surface such as a standard hard drive platter to grab data from, data access time is significantly decreased.

Again, the question is sometimes raised: "If flash is faster and smaller than a hard-disk drive, why not use flash memory to replace all hard drives?"

The reason is that in practical applications, flash memory and hard-disk drives serve different purposes. For example, typical desktop PC's need gigabytes of storage space (far beyond the present capacity of flash memory—about 100MB). Also, desktops don't have power constraints because they're plugged into A/C outlets, and durability isn't an issue because they're stationary. In this case, there's no need for the features that flash has to offer. Plus, as with RAM, flash cannot compete with hard disks in price.

However, a flash drive would be more suitable than a hard-disk drive in situations where size, power consumption, and ruggedness are important factors, and where capacity needs are smaller. Some examples would include handheld computer games, digital cameras, palmtop computers in manufacturing environments, or notebook computers in medical, insurance claims, and military/government field situations.

How is flash memory used?

Because of its ability to withstand tremendous shock without losing data, its ability to store information without constant power, and its low voltage requirements, flash memory is a suitable replacement for portable hard drives in rugged situations, yet its range of applications is also broader. Some other applications for flash memory include:
- ☞ digital cameras, cell phones, pagers and audio recorders
- ☞ scanners—to store images and voice data networking devices —to store the microcode and instructions needed for transferring data
- ☞ printers and print servers—to hold fonts or frequently-used graphics
- ☞ desktops —to replace ROM BIOS chips (the BIOS configures your computer every time you turn it on)

One ideal application for flash memory would be in a digital camera. In this camera, the flash memory card would function as an electronic roll of digital film. In fact, depending on data compression, an average of six to fifteen pictures per MB could

by Stan Tishler

WEB PUBLISHING WITH COREL WORDPERFECT SUITE 8: THE OFFICIAL GUIDE by Jeff Hadfield; Osborne/McGraw-Hill; 486 pages; $34.99; ISBN-0-07-882348-X

The rather long title of this how-to book is a good description of what's inside. In just under 500 pages the author takes you through the procedures you need to know for Web publishing using WordPerfect 8.

This book is a true "cookbook." Ingredient-by-ingredient you build your Web page: you need to know nothing about HTML (hypertext markup language, the native tongue of Web pages). With the book as a guide, I quickly designed a very primitive Web page. However, a couple of times the author, while ostensibly going step-by-step, confused me by skipping a screen or two.

Nevertheless, I followed along, doing as I read, and developed a Web page in very short order. There were tips on the use of colors, fonts and layout. I learned how to establish hyperlinks (pointers to other pages, other Web sites or other files) and how to incorporate documents from Quattro Pro and Presentations into a Web page. Using graphics and Java applets were covered, too.

All in all this is a book worth reading. It taught me a great deal about the subject. If you use it as nothing more than a tutorial on Web publishing you will be well served. ■

PHOTOSHOP IN A NUTSHELL—A DESKTOP QUICK REFERENCE BY Donnie O'Quinn and Matt LeClair; O'Reilly & Associates, Inc.; 583 pages; $19.95; ISBN-1-56592-313-8

If you've ever used Adobe's Photoshop you know that it does lots of incredible things if only you can figure out how to do them. One of my problems is that I don't use it on a regular basis and so, when I do use it, I find that I've forgotten how to do something and need to learn how all over again.

This book describes every tool, command, palette and sub-menu in Photoshop 4. Even though it clearly states that it is to be used as a handy reference rather than a tutorial, I was hoping that it would solve some of my Photoshop problems. In some respects it did; in others, not quite. I tried removing the red–eye effect in a photo. The step-by-step instructions were excellent; even a person who had never used Photoshop could follow them. Coverage of the palettes (grouped sets of functions or actions) was concise and informative as was step-by-step instruction in the use of the tools. Some of the special notes describing functionality were really valuable. For the first time I understood what to do (Alt-click) when the eyedropper tool would only change the background color.

Entering text has never been one of Photoshop's better features and I usually have to refer to the manual and third-party books to get it right. I tried entering text using the book's instructions and found the material to be only minimally acceptable. This may not have been a fair test since even Adobe suggests that text is better imported from a program like Illustrator.

Despite its reasonable price, I don't think this can be your only book if you are just starting out as a Photoshop user. You'll also need a book that is project-oriented, so that you can experience the tools and filters in action. At $19.95, Photoshop in a Nutshell is one of the lower-priced Photoshop books I've seen. ■

RPCUG Income and Expenses
Oct. 1, 1996–Sept. 30, 1977

INCOME

Dues	$4239
Professional listings	100
Sale of donated monitors	38
Secret Guide to Computers	166
TOTAL	**$4543**

EXPENSES

Newsletter (printing)	1943
Postage	1132
Web site domain name	200
Executive board reimbursement	455
Liability insurance	555
Rental of meeting rooms	950
Projection screen	400
Supplies	322
Computer fair and Intergalactic admissions	107
APCUG dues	50
TOTAL	**$ 6114**
Deficit	**$1571**

Flash Memory *(continued from page 8)*

be stored in this flash card. After taking pictures in the field (e.g., police, insurance adjusters, architects) the digital images could be loaded directly into any notebook or desktop. Another instance might be in a truck that uses an onboard computer. Every time the truck hit a pothole in the road, the system might crash, but not with flash memory. ■

FULLSHOT97

by Sy Ribakove

There are several commercial applications specifically designed for capturing screen images. You might wonder why, since Windows already has that capability. See for yourself. In Windows you have only to press the Print Screen key (top row-right on the keyboard) to copy the entire monitor image—open menus, windows, icons, whatever—to the Windows Clipboard. You can't see it there; the Windows Clipboard is simply a reserved area of memory. But from the Clipboard you can paste the screen image into a draw program, a paint program, a page layout program, your wordprocessor—any application that can use Clipboard images. You can even limit your capture to the currently active window alone; just hold Alt while pressing Print Screen. Again, it is a simple matter to paste the screen shot into a waiting Windows application. What you can't do in Windows is what the Print Screen key says: print the image on the screen.

In the bad old days when DOS was the prevailing PC operating system, Print Screen actually did what the key said: you pressed it and a screen image was sent directly to your printer—it was the standard way to print directory listings or the contents of AUTOEXEC.BAT or CONFIG.SYS. It has not been possible to print the screen from the Graphical User Interface (GUI) of any version of Windows without outside help.

But **FullShot97** from Inbit Incorporated can do more than print a Windows screen. It squeezes more juice out of the simple task of capturing screens than you would think possible. With **FullShot**, which runs under Windows 3.*x*, Windows 95 or NT, you can capture or print the entire screen, a single window, an irregular area marked off with your mouse, the mouse cursor itself, a menu—even a single button. And every one of these maneuvers can be accomplished with one mouse click or key press. If you like, you can even combine multiple screen shots into a single image in the **FullShot** window.

Once you capture an image with **FullShot** you can export it as a BMP, TIF, WPG, PCX, GIF, DIB, JPG, RLE, or CLP file. **FullShot** reads any or all of these formats as well as CUR and ICO (cursor and icon) files. A nice side benefit is that the program can be used for converting any of your graphic files to and from any of the supported formats.

No matter how many colors or what screen resolution you are displaying on your monitor, **FullShot 97** does its work instantly and flawlessly. Screen captures can be matted and framed, like photos, as well as scaled, rotated and flopped. If your screen captures are destined to appear in a black and white publication such as **ComputerConnection**, **FullShot** will convert them to black and white or grayscale as you capture them. The conversion is done quickly and automatically.

Despite its ease of use, **FullShot** is a professional quality utility. I have used it to transmit screen shots to tech support people so that they could see the exact wording of error messages as well as the condition of my desktop when a problem occurred. The resulting picture has frequently been worth more than a thousand words. The screen shots on pages 5 and 6 were done with **FullShot**.

Anyone who is preparing a computer book or newsletter, a handout, a presentation, a marketing flyer, a Web page or a manual, will find **FullShot97** a worthwhile tool. It's available with a 30-day money-back guarantee from Inbit (800-227-1788) for $49.95. ∎

President (continued from page 2)

fisher*people?*). Thanks, Matt, for an educational and entertaining presentation.

IBM will return in November to demonstrate **ViaVoice Gold**, a brand new continuous speech recognition product. Three years ago we looked at the first incarnation of IBM's Personal Dictation System. Since then, the capabilities have been significantly enhanced. We will see hands-free voice navigation, document creation via dictation, and the many other capabilities contained in the product.

See you on **Tuesday, November 11** at 7:30 P.M. at the Rockland Conservatory, 7 Perlman Drive, Spring Valley. ∎

The Nitty-Gritty

This issue of ComputerConnection was produced on a Pentium 133 MHz computer. Copy was prepared in WordPerfect 7, then imported into Adobe PageMaker 6.5. PostScript Type 1 fonts were used throughout: Adobe Minion and Minion Black for body text and headlines, URW Sans for subheads.

The document is sent by modem to our three member proofreaders— Marian Baade, Dick Blumenthal and Stan Smith—in Adobe Acrobat format.

The corrected document is saved as a .PS file, checked for layout errors with Ghostscript, compressed using WinZip 6.3, and transmitted by modem to our printer in Mount Vernon.

The final output device is a 600 dpi Xerox Docutech 135.

The document is saved once again in PageMaker as an Adobe Acrobat document. This is transmitted by modem to our Webmaster, Steve Weinberg, who adds it to the newsletter page for online reading or downloading. ∎

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