

InfoWorld

The Newsweekly for Microcomputer Users

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Cromemco Graphics

Osborne Gets 80 Columns

Dow Jones Joins CBS

NEWSPAPER



Cover: The Electronic Palette, page 18

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InfoWorld

The Newsweekly for Microcomputer Users

Two corporate giants jump into software publishing

Dow Jones and CBS hop on the bandwagon, but take different routes to purveying wares

By John Markoff, IW Staff

CBS, Inc., and Dow Jones & Company have both announced that they are entering the software-publishing business.

The corporate giants have chosen different routes to approach the personal-computer industry, however.

Dow Jones has announced a series of business-analysis software programs, designed to be used in con-

junction with the Dow Jones News Retrieval electronic information service. CBS, on the other hand, has contracted with K-Byte Software of Troy, Michigan, to provide games for the Atari 400- and 800-series computers.

Tim Turner, Dow Jones News Retrieval marketing director, pointed to recent software market entries by John Wiley, McGraw-Hill and Irwin Books (a Dow Jones subsidiary), as well as CBS and Dow Jones, as an indica-

tion that major corporations have finally recognized the significance of the software market.

"I think that the real story is our commitment to software publishing," he said.

Cheryl Daly, a spokesperson for CBS, said that in addition to the games that have been announced so far, CBS intends to introduce "home management" and educational software. She said that CBS will also be developing

some of its software internally.

Industry analysts tend to see the latest corporate entries as confirmation of the growth potential of the software-publishing market.

"This is evidence that everyone wants to get on the gravy train," said Jean Yates, president of Yates Ventures, a Los Altos, California, market-research company that specializes in software.

"The profit margin for winners is fantastic," she added, noting that she expected other major traditional publishers to try to buy their way into software publishing by acquiring an already successful software company.

Chris Yolanis, a project director at Creative Strategies, a San Jose, California, market-research firm, said that he

See Dow and CBS, page 5

Early January is target date for Osborne upgrade

By Paul Freiberger, IW Staff

Osborne 1 owners will soon be able to upgrade their portable computer so that it will have 80 columns instead of 52 and double-density disk drives instead of single density.

The Osborne 1, which has been available since April 1981, was the first portable microcomputer. Since then, several other companies have begun producing portables, some with more features than the original Osborne 1. Now Osborne is offering some of these features.

Owners of an Osborne 1 made after September 15 can have the changes made by their dealers, but machines that were built earlier will have to be returned to the Osborne factory in Hayward, California, where the company is preparing an orderly way of handling the upgrade.

"In the worst case someone will be without the machine for 14 days," explains Osborne Computer spokesman Thom Hogan.

Users can begin to reserve their spot in the upgrade schedule immediately by contacting their dealer, but the work will not begin until January 4, adds Hogan.

If users have their machines upgraded at the factory, it will cost \$185 each for double density and 80 columns, and \$110 for installation and adjustment. Thus, a complete upgrade will cost \$480.

In some cases, disk drives and power supplies will have to be completely changed.

Single density and 52 columns remain the Osborne standard; buyers desiring the enhanced capabilities on

See Osborne upgrade, page 5



Charles Moore gave a seminar on image processing (photos by R. Milewski).

Forth community come of age Wider spectrum attend annual convention

By Richard A. Milewski

SAN JOSE, CA—The Red Lion Inn here was the site of the Third Annual Forth convention. Sponsored by the Forth Interest Group, the one-day event is the largest annual gathering of the community of Forth users. While both minicomputer and microcomputer users were represented, microcomputerists heavily outnumbered the minicomputer contingent.

Although the theme of this year's conference was Forth applications, the number of vendors exhibiting turnkey application packages was quite small. Most Forth applications

are custom, one-time development efforts, but many of the vendors at the show have application packages in development. If only some of these packages make it to market, next year's show will feature an avalanche of off-the-shelf applications in Forth.

Most exhibitors were showing Forth language systems and development tools for various pieces of hardware. The most popular machine for which new Forths are being crafted appeared to be (surprise, surprise) the IBM Personal Computer. Other notable systems included Creative Solutions

See Forth convention, page 4

MicroPro Int'l restructures' by laying off 100-plus

Pares staff to compare with its competitors

By Paul Freiberger, IW Staff

For the second time in recent months, MicroPro International has announced that it is laying off employees. This time the layoff is even more dramatic than the 10% cut in personnel last August.

The ax has not finished falling yet, but it looks like the publisher of WordStar and DataStar will let between 100 and 150 people go this time, in what a company spokesman refers to as a "restructuring" and a "dynamic process."

Among those no longer working at MicroPro are senior vice-president Bruce Van Natta and vice-president of finance Donald Fluken.

Bruce Bastl, MicroPro's current vice-president of domestic sales and marketing, said that neither Van Natta nor Fluken had been fired. Van Natta retired, and Fluken resigned, offered Bastl.

A source close to MicroPro said that Van Natta did not leave voluntarily, however, and in fact had to be escorted from the company's San Rafael, California, facilities by a security officer. Bastl did not confirm this account and, when pressed with regard to its accuracy, said, "To my knowledge it

See MicroPro layoffs, page 5

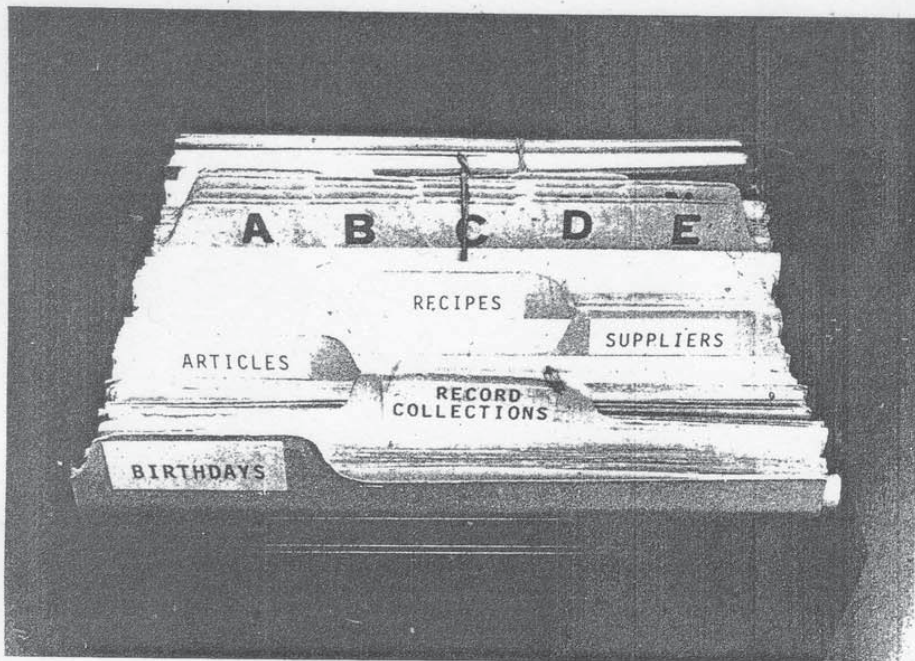
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IN FOCUS

Engineers monitor information flow in vast packet-switching network. Our In Focus section, Personal Computers Communicate, starts on page 21.





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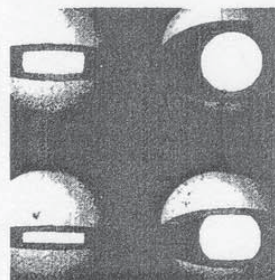
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IN FOCUS: PERSONAL COMPUTERS COMMUNICATE



By John Markoff, IW Staff

Rich Schinnel's computer rarely sleeps.

Located in his home in Rockville, Maryland, his IBM PC silently runs a software program that allows other computer users to log onto it all hours of the day and night.

And call they do. Since setting up his system to accept public calls during the middle of the summer, almost 6000 calls have been placed to the system.

See Software, page 22

In Focus

Software

continued from preceding page

Unlike most other personal-computer bulletin-board software that is designed for electronic communications, however, Schinnel's host communications software (Hostcomm) is designed principally for uploading and downloading software written for the IBM Personal Computer.

Therein lies a simple revolution. Personal computers have become communications devices, and as the distinction between computers and the telephone becomes increasingly murky, a grass-roots movement is springing up around transferring software directly between computers. Software publishing companies

aren't about to be left out either. A new industry based on the electronic transmission of software—both games and business programs—is on the verge of blossoming, and giant conglomerates such as CBS, Time-Life, Inc. and Knight Ridder are mulling its potential on the sideline.

Still, as in the personal-computer industry before it, individuals and hobbyists have led the way in computer communications.

The author of Hostcomm, Don Withrow, wrote the downloading program on a dare and a bet. Schinnel bet him a steak dinner that he couldn't write a program in two weeks that would allow Schinnel to call and leave a message on Withrow's IBM PC while he was away from his computer.

Withrow did it, and the program eventually grew, after many revisions, to become Hostcomm.

Another programmer, Andrew Fluegelman, wrote a popular communications program for the IBM PC and released it to the public under a "freeware" concept that gives users the option of paying for the program if they find it helpful.

Fluegelman has found that PC-TALK has developed an electronic life of its own: it has appeared on many computers for downloading and has been passed from system to system.

What has started at a person-to-person level is about to be transformed overnight. The term *teleshare* has emerged, and software publishing houses, computer manu-

facturers and even cable companies are preparing to get into the act.

Time-Life, Inc., is preparing to announce a full-channel cable-teletext experiment in San Diego, California, and Orlando, Florida, that will utilize electronically transmitted software to increase the users' ability to manipulate information. The effective data rate of the system, which utilizes the full bandwidth of a television channel, will be between four and five megabits.

Bill von Meister, one of the original founders of The Source Telecomputing Corporation, has set up a new venture, Creative Associates, that plans to market Gameline, a plug-in 1200-baud modem for Atari's new video-game machine.

The system allows users to download and play video arcade games in their homes. The game software will reside in RAM and self-destruct after a certain number of plays.

Teleshare will soon become routine partly because computer users want instant gratification.

Von Meister is planning to sell the modem module for \$39.95 and charge for each game played, although users will be paying only a fraction of what coin-operated arcades now cost.

Already in existence is PlayCable, a joint venture of Mattel and General Instrument, a large cable-equipment manufacturer. PlayCable allows cable subscribers to download games into Intellivision sets and play them an unlimited number of times for a flat monthly fee.

Comshare, which owns Target Software and is a computer network and timesharing company, is looking closely at plans to use its network nodes as an electronic distribution point for software. Comshare has many network points in Europe and the United Kingdom.

In England, the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) has been broadcasting teletext software to users of Acorn personal computers for several years. Currently the software is educationally oriented; however, the BBC may soon send a wider range of software.

In this country, National Public Radio (NPR) and the National Information Utility Corporation have announced plans to broadcast software to personal computers over the FM carrier sideband of NPR stations. Personal computers would be fitted with a "black box" receiver that would capture the transmissions and automatically download software.

Although it claims that it has no intention of moving into the teleshare market itself, Radio Shack will soon market a system that makes small-scale teleshare business an attractive possibility. Ron Stegall, Radio Shack's vice-president of computer merchandising, notes that the company already offers a multiplexer that simultaneously allows 16 callers to access their Model 16 computers and allow them to function as a small host-information utility. By June 1983

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