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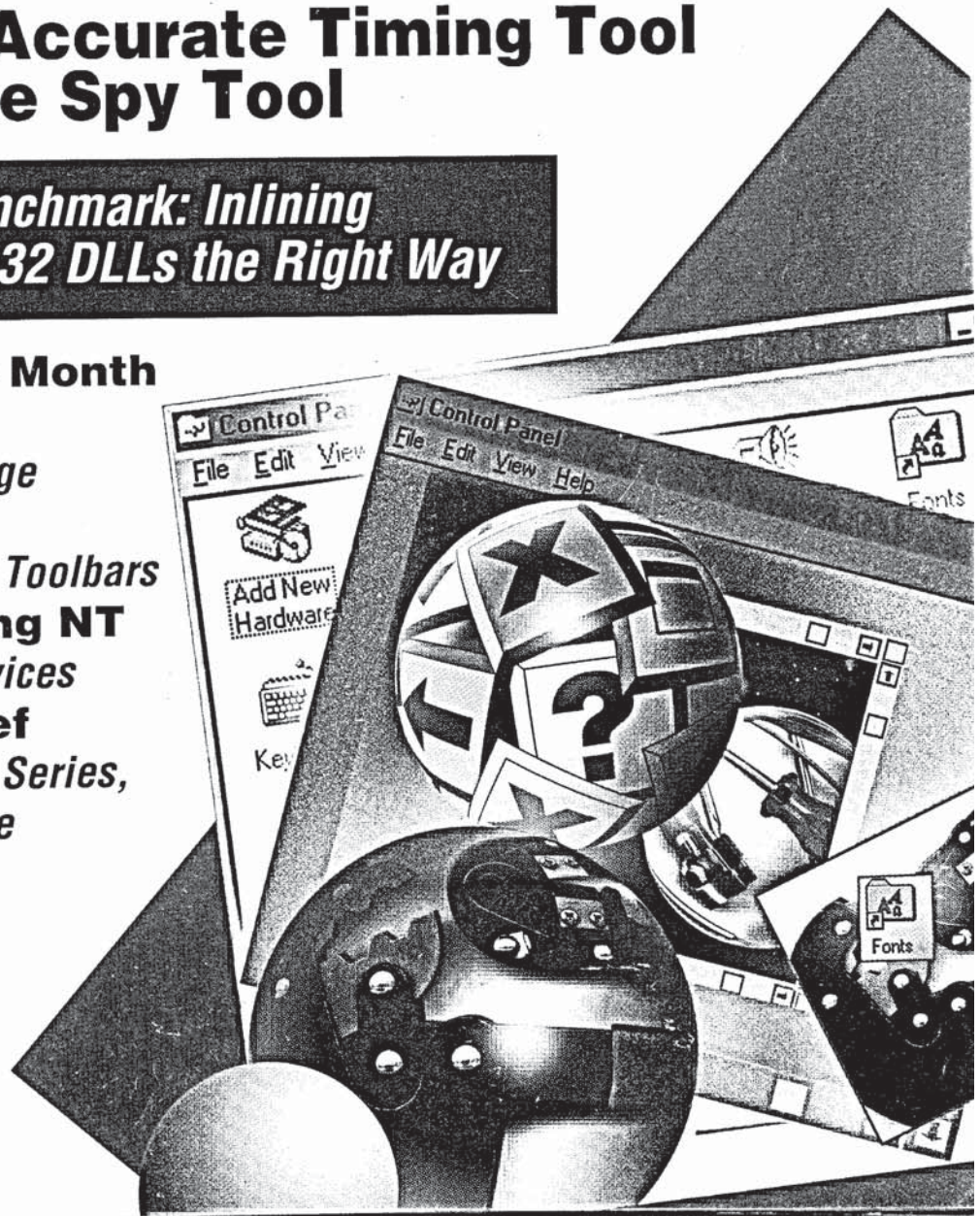
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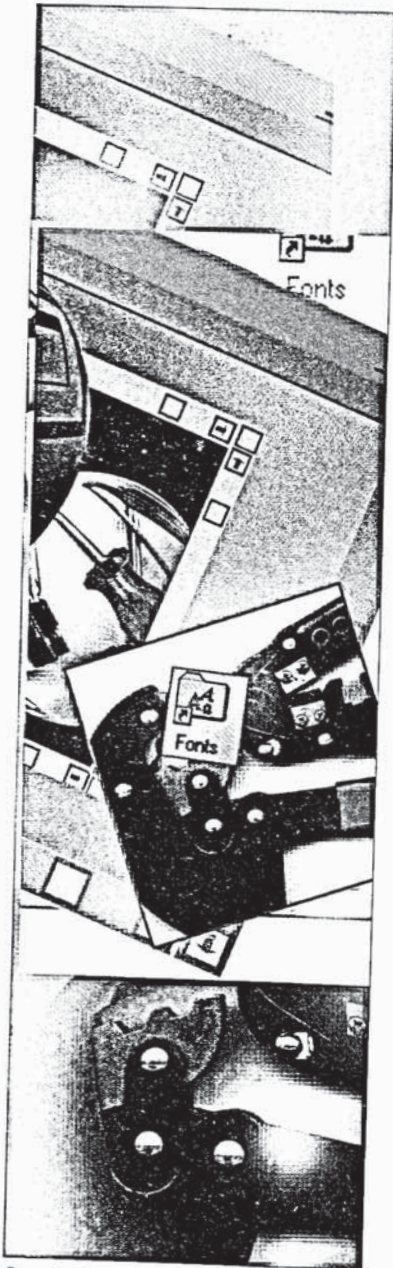
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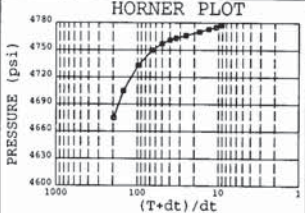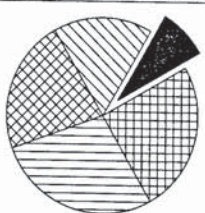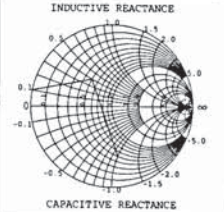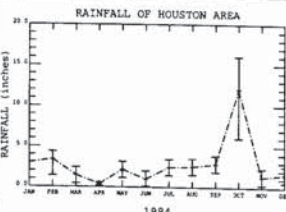
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I admit that there are so few good hardware books available that I tend to get enthusiastic about even mediocre attempts. But this series of books is truly an important part of my library. The series is generally based around processor architectures and bus architectures (with a few miscellaneous topics such as Plug-and-Play). I find that most books that call themselves processor architecture books are really references for the assembly language instruction set of that particular processor. While those books fill a need, they don't give readers an understanding of the overall hardware design and are not adequate references for device driver writers. This is especially true of bus architectures; for example, it is extremely difficult to find good technical information about the PCI or PCMCIA buses. When I do manage to find an occasional hardware reference on the bookshelf, I almost hesitate to pick it up for fear of seeing the inevitable $89+ price tag. As a welcome relief, the MindShare series titles range from $19.95 to $34.95. At this price, I don't feel bad spending the money on a book I might use only as an occasional reference. Ironically, though, my office copy of *EISA System Architecture* currently holds the title of "most likely to be borrowed by a coworker."

The format of these books is quite different than that of the average computer book. Each book is based on a seminar taught by the author and that heritage is evident in the book's structure — it flows more like modules than chapters. Like most hardware books, they get right to the point; there are none of the self-indulgent authorial digressions that you see in some software development books. But, unlike most hardware books, these are actually readable. Most hardware references read like encyclopedias — even the publishers don't expect anyone to actually read the

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