OTTAWA PC NEWS

Coming up

The lighter side of Microsoft

*by Susan Phillips
and Lynda Simons*

On December 15, Microsoft's Bob Scowcroft will touch on two business products, but this close to the festive season, he's coming in to have fun. The highlight of the night will be home entertainment products, such as CD-ROM, multimedia and entertainment pack software. Just in time for Christmas.

Bob will spend 10 or 15 minutes on their networking product, Windows for Workgroups, and a new Windows-based database management system, Access. He will also highlight a product that is "shipping now", new Video for Windows. This product can capture and edit video from a variety of inputs including TV and VCR, depending on the installed hardware.

Let the fun begin

Leading off the demonstration of new Microsoft goodies will be the new Entertainment Pack, (Volume IV) which contains all new games, for example, Jezball (try to capture bouncing ball in minimal grid space), or Chips Challenge (navigate a maze to pick up microchips).

Sounds great

Bob will also show off CD-ROM software such as Cinemania, a package which includes Leonard Maltin's movie reviews, lots of stills from famous movies, Bogie, Cary Grant and voice tracks from all the major movies, that you can cut and patch into your presentations. Another series of new CD-ROM products is called Sound Bits. There are three sets available: collections of musical, movie and cartoon/Hannah-Barbera sound bits.

Bob, whose presentation in April on Windows 3.1 was plagued with projection problems, is bringing his own multivideo speakers with a base subsystem he promises will fill the room with sounds, such as Daffy Duck babbling along in the background.

Exciting encyclopaedia

Bob will also give us a sneak look at a pre-release copy of Encarta, an exciting new multimedia product that Microsoft is close to releasing. He promises that this combination of sounds, animation and video will be something people have never seen (or heard) before.

NT: Not There (yet)

Bob isn't planning to cover Windows NT — unless someone asks him about it. He did offer this though: Microsoft is currently looking at next April for release. He also says that NT (the-maybe-it's-a-replacement-for-DOS,-maybe-it-isn't-32-bit-OS), is "...absolutely not your general desk-top operating system". According to Microsoft product PR material, NT is aimed at people "…who need the most advanced applications and hardware available…true workstation power or sophisticated server systems". According to Bob, the average person running a word processor and a spread-

sheet is not going to have a compelling reason to go to Windows NT. Microsoft, he says, intends that future versions of DOS/Windows will "match the functionality and performance of NT ". Does this help you make up your mind about OS/2?

In Santa's sack

Like Santa, Bob promises to bring us presents, but you'll have to come to the meeting to see what the goodies are.

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The DOS "TRUENAME" command

by Robert Parkinson

Starting with v4.00, the MS-DOS command processor COMMAND.COM contains the undocumented internal command "TRUENAME". While this command has been discussed in several references, its use remains unclear, at least until you understand exactly what it does and doesn't do. To quote one reference:

"Pass TRUENAME a filename, and it returns a fully qualified filename —, one that includes a drive letter and a complete path to the file from the root directory. The command's real benefit is that it sees through drive and directory aliases created by SUBST or network utilities."

As it turns out, the second sentence of that quote is correct, but the first sentence is wildly misleading, if not outright erroneous.

TRUENAME has two major limitations which a user needs to understand. First, it's no substitute for the FIND command, and second, it doesn't always tell the truth.

No substitute for FIND

It does NOT check to see if the file actually exists, it merely echoes the filename back to you, appended to a drive and directory. Thus, in no way can it be considered as a substitute for the DOS external "FIND" command or any of the many non-Microsoft "find-file" utilities.

It can appear to lie

The drive and directory returned by TRUENAME are NOT necessarily those where the file actually resides. If you pass TRUENAME simply a filename, with no path, TRUENAME merely returns the filename appended to the current drive and directory. If you pass TRUENAME a full pathname, it simply returns that pathname. Those two statements are true unless you are on a network or using SUBST or ASSIGN — read on.

To illustrate, suppose that you are in C:\TEMP and a file called XYX.DAT is in C:\DATA. If you use "TRUENAME XYZ.DAT", the reply is "C:\TEMP\XYZ.DAT". Hardly very helpful. If you were to use "TRUENAME A:\XYZ.DAT", you get "A:\XYZ.DAT". Also not too useful.

Understanding its limitations

If you are on a network or using SUBST or ASSIGN, then TRUENAME can be of great value, but only if used with an understanding of its limitations. You must know that the filename exists and know where it is. But, if you know those things, why use TRUENAME at all? The answer is in the quote I used at the outset, "it sees through drive and directory aliases". For example, if you use the "SUBST F: C:\DATA" command to map the subdirectory of your hard drive C: to virtual drive F:, using "DIR F:\" command, DOS will give you a listing of all the files on (non-existent) F: drive. But, if you use the command "TRUENAME F:\XYZ.COM" you will see "C:\DATA\XYZ.COM". Or, if the current directory is F: and you enter "TRUENAME XYZ.COM" you will get "C:\DATA\XYZ.COM". Now this sort of information can be useful to you. Here's another example from anOPCUG member on the use of TRUENAME on a LAN:

"I logged onto G:, which is the D: drive (2nd hard drive) of a different machine (called GEORGE). I entered the command "TRUENAME QDATA.QDI" and it returned "\\GEORGE\D-DRIVE\QDATA.QDI", which is the real location of the file in Lantastic terms."

Likewise, TRUENAME can be of value if you use the ASSIGN command. Let's assume that you have used "ASSIGN F=B" to map floppy drive F: to floppy drive B:. A "DIR F:" and a "DIR B:" command will return the same listings. But a "TRUENAME B:\XYZ.COM" will return "F:\XYZ.COM". Logged on to the B: drive, "TRUENAME XYZ.COM" will also return "F:\XYZ.COM".

I hope that I have clarified usage of the undocumented TRUENAME command for you. It may be of value to you. Just remember its limitations, especially the fact that it does NOT check to see if the file really exists at all.

Many thanks to OPCUG members Lynda Simons, Chris Taylor, Philip Baker and Eric Clyde for their assistance.

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Calendar *(subject to change)*

General Meeting Location:	Sir Robert Borden HS 131 Greenbank Road
General Meeting Time:	7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Date and Time	Topic and Location
THURSDAY, January 28	WordPerfect
Tuesday, February 23	to be announced

Making your computer suit your needs, part 7:
Doskey Macros *(continued)*

by Eric Clyde

The October issue took a look at Doskey macros, explained how to create them, and compared them with batch files. This month we review that article, and give you a few examples to practise converting to macros.

The earlier articles in this series introduced Doskey, and showed how you can use it to make your life much easier (especially if you are not an expert typist) by:

- defining (or redefining) commands
- recalling and reusing previously issued commands
- correcting mistypings (or to slightly change previously issued commands)
- setting up Doskey macros (groups of commands)

Macros vs. batch files

You can think of macros as substitutes for simple batch files, but they execute much more quickly. Remember that each macro:

- has to fit on one (long) line of instructions, i.e. not more than 127 characters
- cannot contain a goto statement, although it can start a batch file which does

If, by mistake, you give a macro the same name as a batch file, the batch file will never execute, since macros are run from immediate memory.

Commands which normally appear on separate lines in a batch file are separated by "$t" in a macro. Thus, the following batch file, WP.BAT:

```
c:
cd\wp51
wp %1
cd\
```

becomes

```
doskey wp=c: $t cd\wp51 $t wp $1
    $t cd\
```

as a macro.

Note that:

- the macro starts with "doskey=the name of the macro"
- the replaceable parameter,"%1" of the batch file becomes "$1"

A list of the other conversions that have to be made are as follows:

Operator	Batch files	Macros
Repl. param.	%1...%9	$1...$9
Redir. output	>	$g (or $G)
Redir.+append	>>	gg (or GG)
Redir. input	<	$L (or small l)
Pipe output	|	$b (or $B)

Your turn

For practice, try changing the following batch files into macros:

Example 1: ZIP.BAT uses Pkzip to pack the files "%2" into a file %1.ZIP on drive a:

```
pkzip a:%1 %2
```

Example 2: CONTIG.BAT checks your hard disk for "non-contiguous" files, i.e., those with parts separated on your hard disk.

```
chkdsk *.* | find "non"
```

Example 3: Take an application that you use frequently and develop a macro similar to "wp" above.

Saving your macros

Unless you save your macros, you lose them when you switch off your computer. There are two ways to save macros. First try using the command:

```
doskey /h
```

This gives a listing of the most recent commands you have issued. If this contains all of the macros you have developed (as well as other things), issue the command:

```
doskey /h macros.bat
```

to produce a file which you can edit to remove unwanted lines. (Remember that the file must be saved in ASCII format.)

If "doskey /h" did not show all of the macros you wanted to keep, issue the command:

```
doskey /m macros.bat
```

This produces a file consisting of only the macros. Unfortunately, to make it useable, you will have to edit each line so that each starts with "doskey".

When you have produced your file MACROS.BAT, you can then reload your macros by issuing the command:

```
macros
```

Good luck with your experiments!

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from the editor

We hope you enjoyed this extra (eleventh issue) of the newsletter.
The executive and newsletter team whishes you
a very merry festive season.

Happy Holidays

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