OTTAWA PC NEWS

Review of the February meeting

CD-ROM: Under construction...

by Jackson Hibler

There has been a lot of space given to explaining CD-ROM terminology in the computer press of late. NEC Corporation and CDR Technologies attempted to give us more information at the February meeting. Part of the reason for the educational process is that CD-ROM is not a finished project. There are blueprints available such as the "Red Book" to support audio CDs, the "Yellow Book" to support CD-ROMs and the "Green Book" to support full motion CD-I video with an on-drive 68000 CPU.

Evolving building standards

There are evolving building standards:

- MPC (Multimedia PC) Level One
- DVI (Intel's version of CPU-supported compressed, full-motion, interleaved audio)
- "Orange Book" (to support recordable CDs and now incorporating Kodak's CD-R)
- CD-ROM-XA (Phillips, Sony and Microsoft's new Multimedia PC,Level 2).

For the most lucid explanation of these evolving standards I recommend you look to Roger C. Alford's *CD-ROM Inside and Out* in BYTE (March 1993, Under the Hood).

File formats

Running what Stewart Tidd and Maureen Holland told us at the meeting through Roger Alford's filter, I get the following picture:

If you're interested in displaying text data and static images (photos, graphs, art), make sure your drive (Maureen and Stuart prefer to call it a "reader") and the data encoded on your disk supports the ISO 9660 file-format structure. This is the lowest common denominator format—sort of the ASCI of CD information. It was first formulated by the High Sierra group, which lent its moniker to the format. Note that ISO 9660 lacks support for advanced platform-specific file system features, similar to the way that ASCII supports only primitive text formatting. Your drive will not have to be high-performance: 150 kbps data rates and 400 ms or slower access times are good enough...so the price can be right! Most but not all information published on CD-ROM now comes in this format.

If you are looking for multimedia with interleaved audio and compressed full-motion video, however, the definitive solution has not yet emerged. Not long ago it looked like CD-I or DVI systems would become the standard in this area even though they would require special drives with built-in CPUs and operating systems to handle the decompression. However, the new XA standard supports the ISO 9660 file format (providing backward compatibility for your present disks/data) while also providing interleaved audio and video. XA-compliant drives don't require built-in compression electronics (making drive manufacturers happy) and if the XA standard implements compression later, the electronics may go onto your new CD-con-

Check the envelope in case it contains a new membership card or disk of the month card.

INDEX '93

by Howard Ball

Ottawa's antidote to the February blues took place at the Congress Centre on February 20 when more than one thousand computer enthusiasts gathered for INDEX '93, an exhibition of the latest in hardware and software from more than twenty-five different vendors.

The show, organized by local computer retailer Inly Systems, was divided into two distinct areas: a display area and a seminar area.

Displays

In the display area, various exhibitors' booths were set up. Here, an amazing variety of products was displayed, from memory management software (**Quarterdeck**'s **QEMM-386**) to communications peripherals (**US Robotics**, **Practical Peripherals**) to multimedia hardware (**Media Vision**). Representatives of the companies were on hand to offer advice and information and to show off their products.

While the tabletop displays were often intriguing, it was in the seminar area that the real "action" took place.

Seminars

The seminars, ongoing from 10 a.m., were very popular with the crowd, judging by the lineups in front of the seminar rooms. With everyone hoping for a front row seat, things could have turned ugly indeed; I am happy to report that there were no black eyes or bloody noses in evidence.

As a desktop publisher, I was particularly interested in the upcoming version of **Pagemaker (Aldus Corp.)**, and so I made this seminar one of my priorities. I was not disappointed. Jeff McInnis, the Aldus rep, did a good job of demonstrating the new features of **Pagemaker 5.0**, due to be released by June 1993. With improved printing capabilities, incremental text and graphic rotation, and Aldus "Additions" technology (allowing third-party "add-ins" to work with the program), this upgrade looks promising.

Jeff's next seminar featured Intellidraw, the new Aldus drawing program. I came away very impressed with this program's features, such as "smart" connecting lines and symmetrical drawing tools.

With seminars from **Borland**, **Symantec**, **Microsoft**, **WordPerfect**, **Aldus**, and **Micrografx**, to name only a few, it was almost impossible to attend every seminar that seemed worthwhile. The moral? Next year I'll be sure to get there early.
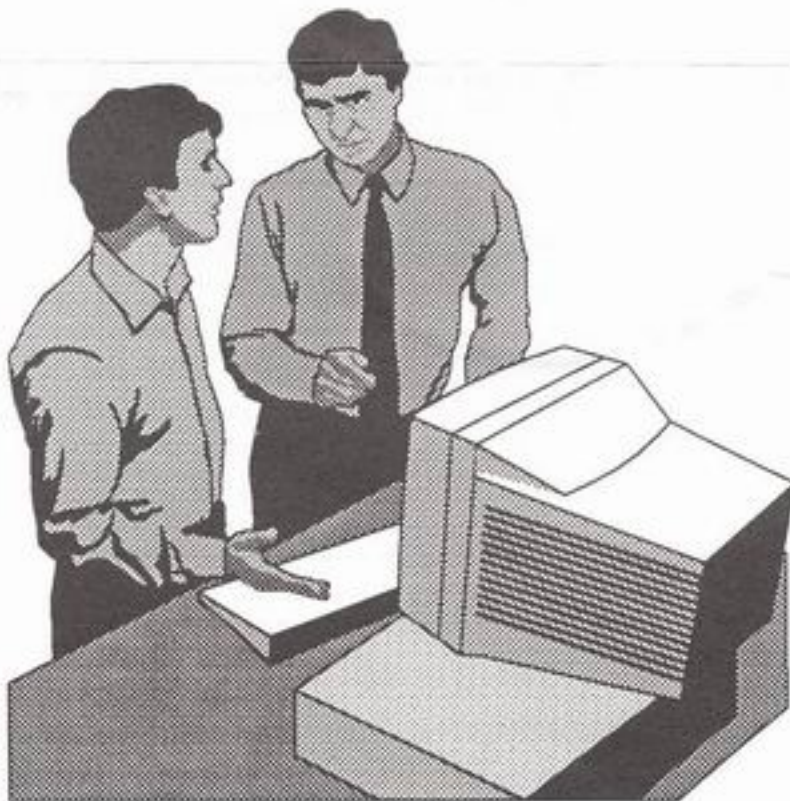
Giveaways

The excitement level moved up a notch at 5:45 p.m. when the displays and seminars ended and prize giveaways began. Nothing can whip a crowd into a frenzy like free software, and this crowd was no exception. With Inly Systems' President Ron Hu doing the honours (with the assistance of the respective company representatives), more than fifteen thousand dollars' worth (M.S.R.P.) of prizes were given away at the closing reception. Hardware, software, a mountain bike (from Micrografx) and a hot-air balloon ride (from Corel): these were just some of the goodies we were all hoping to win.

Those of you who missed INDEX '93 will have to wait until next year for your chance to be informed and entertained on such a grand scale. However, if you can't wait until then, you can get your information "fix" at one of the regular "Inly Days" events.

These events, usually held once a month, and scheduled to coincide with new product or upgrade releases, take place at the store location on Cummings Avenue.

Ron Hu tells me that after everyone involved has had a chance to recuperate from the excitement of organizing INDEX '93, "Inly Days" will be back on track. Look for new product seminars (probably Microsoft) at the next session, tentatively scheduled for mid-April. I'll be there. And with any luck at all, I'll win something this time.

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DOS 6.0 Premiere

by Julie Dustin

A chance to see Bill Gates full-screen and not windowed! Thanks to Microsoft and Fifth Dimension, we will be viewing, through a satellite link-up, the Microsoft premiere of DOS 6.0, simulcast to major cities around the world.

As the show is live from the west coast, 6:00 pm their time, there are changes to our meeting's schedule.

- Special interest group (SIG) meetings will be held BEFORE the show from 7:30 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. Check the usual classrooms (Room 113,115, etc.) for your favourite SIG.
- From 8:15 pm to 8:40 pm, the auditorium doors will be opened to card-carrying OPCUG members only.
- General admittance for non-members and Microsoft's invited guests is from 8:40 pm until 9:00 p.m.

The televised presentation begins at 9:00 p.m. sharp. P.S. no popcorn is allowed in the theatre.

Many publications have already reviewed DOS 6.0 so we know that it contains both original and "bought" code. The new features include memory management, multiple configuration control, anti-virus tools, disk compression, and communications utilities. Bob Scowcroft, Microsoft's local sales representative, will be available to answer questions after the presentation.

As space is limited, come early on Tuesday, March 30th and bring your membership card.

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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. See below

Date and Time	Topic and Location
Tuesday, 30 March	See this page.
Tuesday, 27 April	WordPerfect
Tuesday, 25 May	TBA

Due to the special nature of this meeting, the SIGs will meet from 7:30 p.m., and the main event will start at 9:00 p.m.

Software library

by Norman Dafoe

T he new software library diskettes for February covered a wide range of interest to all members—from neophytes to experienced Windows users. But as usual, it was hard to predict sales; some were sold out before the end of the meeting!

Beginners were treated to **PC-LEARN v5.7**, a complete computer tutorial on disk. There were two graphics packages: **PICTURE EDITING PACKAGE v1.3**, a drawing/layout program for DOS, and **PICTURE MAN v1.5**, a powerful true colour image processing tool for Windows 3.x.

Two special database packages were available: **BIBL v8.32**, a full-featured DOS package for managing your personal or business library, and **DISCTRAK v1.70**, a home entertainment cataloguing database for CDs, albums, and tapes. For the younger set, the **KID'S GAME PACK #1**, a special 1.2 Mb diskette was available. This featured **Word Rescue, Math Rescue** and **Dinos & Dollars**: all fun-filled but educational games.

And to really spoil the evening, **TAXES 1992** made its debut, with two 1-2-3 spreadsheets and two stand-alone programs to help you calculate your 1992 taxes. This disk will be available at the March & April meetings as well.

There will be many new disks for the March meeting. Come by the Software Librarian's desk and take a look!

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FoxPro 2.5: A look at new commands—part 2

by Andrew Ross MacNeill

By the time this newsletter goes to print, FoxPro 2.5 for DOS and Windows should be available from just about every Microsoft reseller in the city. This is the second of two articles taking a look at this new version.

Windows' enhancements

While there are some other noticeable enhancements to the command set in FoxPro 2.5, the largest changes may be found in the Windows product.

Spinner

A new object known as a Spinner was added to the Windows product. A spinner is a control that lets you "spin" through a set of numeric values displayed in a text box. Calling a spinner is just like calling a push button or any other interface object.

INNER num1...(all of the standard @ GET clauses)

The figure above shows what a Spinner looks like.

Font selection

For just about every type of output onto the screen, each command now contains a FONT, SIZE and STYLE command that allows the use of Windows fonts and styles in any application. Under Windows, a simple command like:

```
2,5 SAY "HEL -
```

might become

```
2,5 SAY "HEL - FONT "New Century
Schoolbook",24 STYLE "B"
```

resulting in a "Hello" that used the font New Century Schoolbook at 24 points and in Bold.

The Browse command also supports this new FONT, SIZE and STYLE clauses.

Similar to GETFILE() and GET-DIR(), FoxPro for Windows also allows you to ask the user for their font choice by using GETFONT(). GET-FONT() brings up the FoxPro for Windows Font dialog and returns the user's choice of font, size and style, separated by commas.

On the subject of fonts, FoxPro for Windows also allows you to place all the names of the available fonts in an array for use in a popup or anything by calling AFONT(). You can call AFONT() like this:

```
=AFONT(cArrayName)
```

and the array cArrayName will either be created or redefined as a one-dimensional array with all of the names of the fonts available in Windows in the array. Once you have the font names, you can find out the available font sizes for a particular font by using AFONT() in the following manner:

```
=AFONT(cArrayName,"MS Serif")
```

This will place all of the available sizes for the font "MS Serif" in the array cArrayName.

Or if you only want to find out if a size is available for a particular font, use:

```
x=AFONT(cArrayName,"MS Serif",18)
```

This will check to see if the font MS Serif is available at 18 points. The result will be a logical value, stored in a one row, one column array specified by cArrayName. In addition, the function will return a True or a False.

The functions FONTMETRIC() and SYSMETRIC() will return all of the attributes for a font being used by the current window or the window itself including its character height, ascent, leading spaces, width of frame, character set and more.

Keyboard compatibility

If you were wondering about how to help your users ease into a Windows environment, or wondering about how to do it yourself, FoxPro 2.5 allows you to decide on the keyboard compatibility between DOS and Windows with the command SET KEYCOMP TO DOS | WINDOWS, allowing you to continue to use the FoxPro for DOS keystrokes while working in the Windows environment.

Status Bar command

In FoxPro 2.0, some developers liked to use the STATUS command to display various types of information. In Windows, this has been enhanced with the Status Bar command. A Windows status bar is usually the bar that appears at the bottom of the Window. By placing messages

in the Status Bar, Windows applications give the effect of offering the same types of help that is found in existing DOS applications. To allow this Windows feature in your system, use the SET STATUS BAR ON | OFF Command. What you should also try to do is avoid using the SET STATUS ON | OFF switch under Windows. The result is quite ugly!

Finally, under New Commands, WFONT() will return font information for the current font in a particular window. By passing 1,2, or 3 as the parameter, WFONT() will return font name, size, or style respectively. You can also specify the Window to be checked as the second parameter.

Next time...

There are lots of other various enhancements to the FoxPro language. We'll try to cover them all in future issues. Also, FoxPro for Windows contains several special commands for DDE. These too will be examined in a later issue.

This document and other language documents will be available in the Fox area on the PUB. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please send them to me, Andrew Ross MacNeill, in the Fox SIG, or fax me at 596-3313. Happy Foxing!!!

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trolling SCSI card. Until compression is perfected for the XA standard, however, videos will be small and short.

XA versus DC-I/DVI

My guess is that, by decoupling compression electronics from the drive you can buy today while still offering the hope that it can be added in tomorrow, XA (like VHS) may win out over DC-I/DVI's (like Beta) because of the price advantages to buyer and seller.

Drive equipment

For multimedia, your drive will still have to be state-of-the-art, or I should say "flux-of-the-art". The top-of-the-line NEC models 74/84, for example, just received both hardware and software (ROM) upgrades to become XA-compliant models 74/84-dash-1. You should continue to peruse the most current reviews as some combinations of image decompression, access time, data rate and cache give much smoother moving images than others. We're still in the prototyping zone here with high prices, rapid obsolescence of equipment, diverse disk/software formats and evolving standards. Hard hats must be worn while on site!

I might have been more enthusiastic had I actually seen what multimedia could do. Some experienced multimedia users in the group were disappointed in the limited demonstration. Apparently things were working more impressively at the back of the room before the meeting.When the demo hung for the second time, I asked myself, why the need for the new Windows sound driver? Is there a new one? Is there some other software or hardware incompatibility that I need to beware of before getting a CD-ROM? I guess they should have hung out a sign, "Demo Under Construction".

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PageMaker 5.0

by David Gerrior

Aldus Corporation is about to release PageMaker version 5.0 for Windows in June. Following is a review of what I saw at an introductory session hosted by Aldus Canada. Some interesting changes have been made to make PageMaker (PM) more useful to the desktop publisher (DTPer). Having said that, unless the price is very attractive, the changes are not so dramatic that I would abandon version 4.0. However, if you are considering investing or upgrading, you should check out version 5.0's enhancements.

Multiple windows

Long overdue, is the ability to open multiple publications at the same time. This windowing feature makes it possible to drag-and-drop text and objects between publications—a must when working with long documents saved in multiple files. Currently, PM 4.0 requires that you close a file before opening another which is very time-consuming and irritating.

Rotation

Text and object rotation have been improved with the addition of incremental rotation and skewing. Under the current version, rotation is limited to 4 positions and skewing is nonexistent. To obtain rotation and skewing effects, I use a drawing package such as CorelDraw. The drawback (no pun intended) is switching back and forth between programs to make any modifications. The PM 5.0 improvement eliminates some of the need for a draw package middle-man.

Colour

The colour palette has been expanded and improved, with more colours and applications available. In addition, colour separations are built-in allowing for the generation of spot and process colour separations within the program.

Scanning

Another nice labour-saving feature is the ability to scan images within PM using the TWAIN standard. The standard avoids the extra step of using a scanner program to import images to your publication.
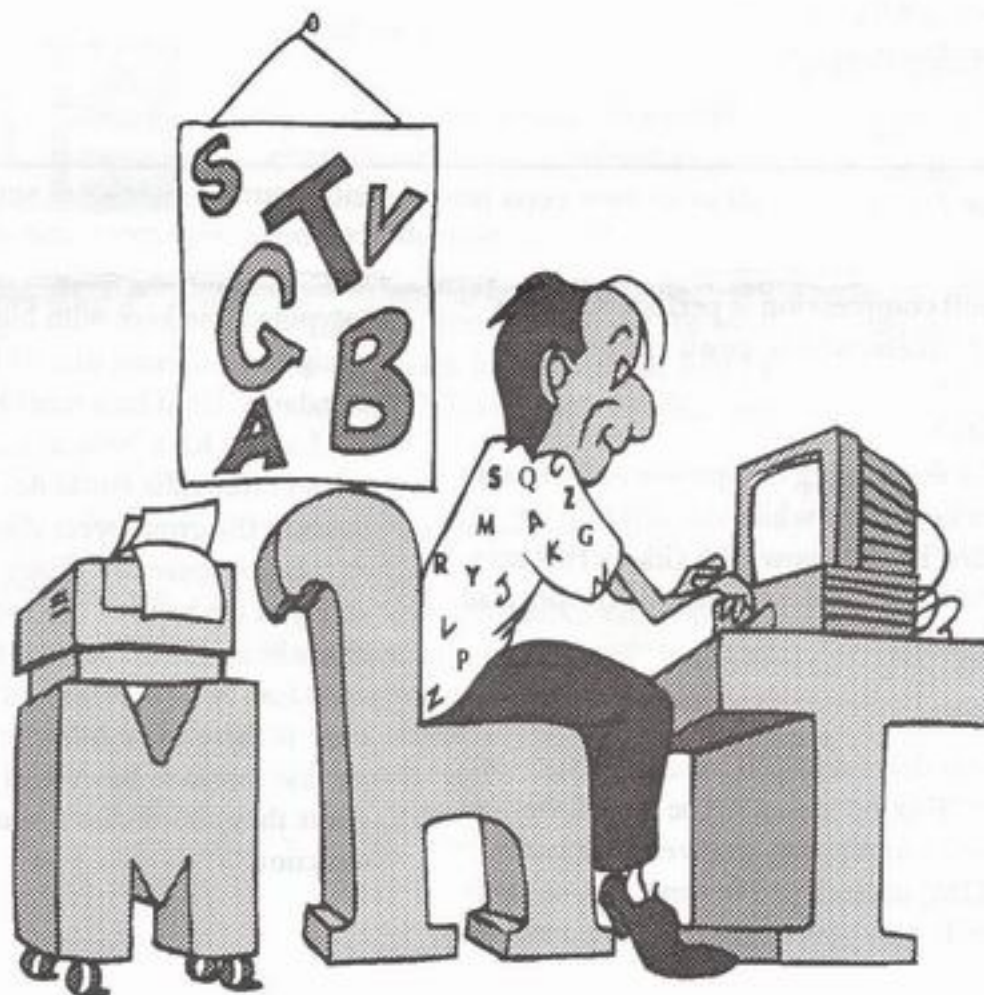
Page printing

A longstanding beef I've had with PageMaker is its inability to print non-consecutive pages at one time. Choices are limited to printing individual pages or a range of consecutive pages. Often I need to print selected ranges and/or pages at one time. The techno-weenies at Aldus must have heard me, late at night as a deadline approaches, cursing their children's children waiting for individual rewritten pages to print. Version 5.0 now includes the ability to print selective ranges and pages. So where's the beef? Gone.

There are a number of additions and improvements to version 5.0 that I have not listed. If you are considering buying or upgrading to a DTP package take a look at Page-Maker version 5.0 (though it may not be in stores yet). Check with your favourite retailer for a spec sheet to see if the improvements warrant the upgrade.

Aldus tells me that they will be shipping 5.0 for Windows sometime in late June. If you are considering Pagemaker for your home or office, check the upgrade availability and requirements. They may be promising a free upgrade with your purchase.

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Using the user group bulletin board—notes on signing on.

by Eric Clyde

The previous articles in this series gave a 'road-map' of the PUB and indicated briefly what modems and communications software do. Now we look at setting up your modem and software, and connecting to the PUB.

Connect your modem

If you have an **external** modem (a separate box), it should be plugged into a serial communication port at the back of your computer (hopefully labelled as COM1, COM2, COM3, or COM4).

If you have an **internal** modem, i.e. a board which plugs into a slot in your computer, you may need to set some switches on it to get it to work properly. In the 'good old days' it was usually possible to assume that COM1 could be used. Nowadays, with other hardware, such as a mouse, potentially using serial ports, you must tell the software which COM port the modem is to use. There is a trap here. A total of four ports may be used, but COM1 and COM3 share the same interrupt (internal computer alerting signal) and should not be used by hardware that can be working at the same time. This is also true for COM2 and COM4. For example, if your mouse uses COM1 (fairly normal nowadays), and another hardware device uses COM2, setting up your modem as COM3 will cause problems. In this case, you should use COM4. In some computers this can cause problems, because Windows would prefer not to use COM4 if COM3 is not being used by some hardware. There is a way around this—phone me if you have this problem.

Software setup

Whatever software you use, when you first use it you will find that you have to enter some basic information:

- the COM port that is to be used
- the telephone number of the PUB (228-0665)
- various parameters—n (for no parity checking), 8 (for the number of data bits), and 1 (for 1 stop bit).
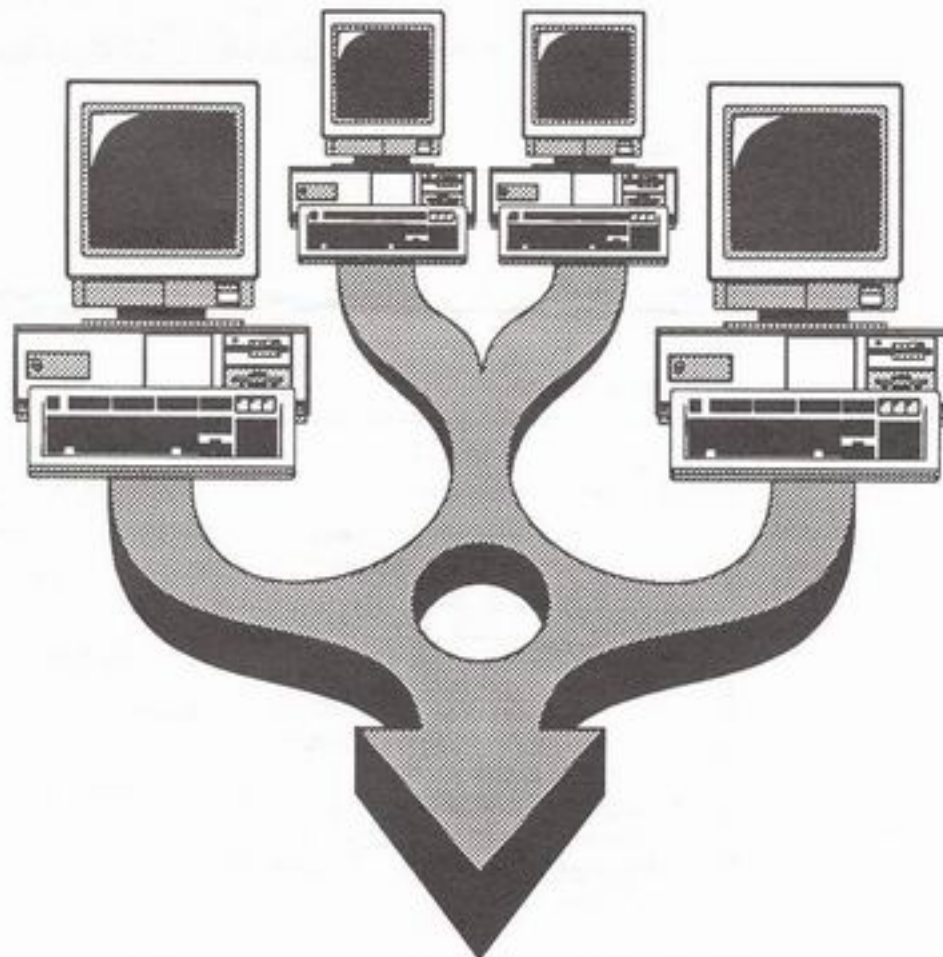
If you do not have touch-tone dialling, you may have to change some other settings as well.

First time at the PUB

And now you can dial into the PUB. If this is your first time, after the initial screen is displayed you will be asked to type your full name and city. If you should happen to get a blank screen, hit the [return] key once. You will then be asked to enter a password—make a note of it and remember it! On this initial tour of the PUB, you will be allowed limited access for up to twenty minutes. Navigation is by means of menus, from which you select the area you want to investigate. Check out the club information area, and the files area (you can look at, but not download files). When you sign off (by using the [~] key, you will be asked if you want to leave a message for the sysop. Enter 'Y' and leave a message that you are a member (with your membership number, if you know it). Within a few days your status will be upgraded and you will be able to make full use of the PUB. When your access status has been upgraded, you will no longer see the non-member menu, but will go straight to the main menu, and will be able to access all of the message areas and to download (or upload) files.

Ottawa PC News

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in June and July.

Deadline
Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month prior to publication.

Mailing Address
3 Thatcher St.
Nepean, Ontario K2G 1S6
Telephone Answering Machine   723-1329
PUB (BBS) N, 8, 1 2400   228-0665
PUB (BBS) MNP5/V.42 9600   228-8550

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Harald Freise   828-3411

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Lynda Simons   739-9318

Software Librarian
Norman Dafoe   723-1909

BBS Sysop
Chris Taylor   723-1329

Hardware/Software Broker
No appointment

Beginners' Corner
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Newsletter Editor
Chris Seal   831-0280

Assistant Editors
Julie Dustin   228-0724
Susan Phillips   725-2935

Newsletter Mail Coordinator
Herb Kelland   733-4259

Group Meetings
OPCUG meets monthly except in June and July. Check the answering machine, the PUB and the newsletter for the date and place of each meeting. Meeting times are 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Membership fees
$25 per year

Disk-of-the-Month
$25 for 5.25 ins. diskettes and $35 per year for 3.5 ins. (for 10 diskettes)

Printed by
Zippy Print
227 Rideau Street (at Cumberland)
Ottawa, Ont. KIN 5X8
Tel: 236-0340

Compressed files

Most of the files available on the PUB have the '.ZIP' file extension, and a few have '.LZH'. This means that the files are store in archived (compressed) format, to minimize the time required for transmission to your modem, and also to reduce the storage space on the PUB's hard disk. To be able to use these, you must first download the files required to decompress them. For the 'zipped' files, download the file PK204G.EXE, stored in the Utilities/Archivers and File Compression area; the corresponding decompression file for the '.LZH' files is LHA213.EXE. I keep my PKZIP and LHA series of files in a special subdirectory (called \PKZIP, since I mostly use PKZIP for ease of upgrading; others prefer to keep them in a more general subdirectory, e.g.

\UTILS. Whichever you decide, copy your downloaded file to it (e.g. XCOPY PKZ204G.EXE C:\PKZIP). Then change to that subdirectory (CD \PKZIP) and run the programme (PKZ204G). This will generate a whole series of related files, including PKZIP (for compressing files to .ZIP format), and PKUNZIP for decompressing them. To decompress YOURFILE.ZIP files, use the command PKUNZIP YOUR-FILE.ZIP C:\XXX, where C:\XXX is the disk and subdirectory where you want the decompressed files to reside. LHA is handled similarly.

For your own convenience you should add the \PKZIP subdirectory to your path.

If you have problems

I am willing to help. Phone me at 749-2387 (at any reasonable time)

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Membership #
(If you are renewing)

First name   Last name *(please use caps.)*

Address   Apt. #

City   Province   Postal Code   Country

(   )   (   )   (   )
Home phone #   Business phone #   Fax #

I use the following hardware: ☐ XT   ☐ AT-286   ☐ 386   ☐ 486
(Check those that apply.)   ☐ 300 baud modem ☐1200 baud modem
☐ VGA ☐ EGA ☐ Herc.   ☐ 2400 baud modem ☐ 9600 baud modem

I use the following software:

I would like to help in the following club activities:
(Check those that apply.)

☐ Programming Instruction
☐ Hardware techniques
☐ Newsletter input
☐ Software library
☐ Promotion/Publicity
☐ Bulletin Board
☐ Other ....

MEMBERSHIP FEE $ 25.00

Disk of the month subscription _____
($25/yr. for 5.25" or $35/yr for 3.5"
10 disks per year) _____

Cheque ☐   Cash ☐   TOTAL $ _____

Mail to: Ottawa PC Users' Group
3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ont. K2G 1S6