OTTAWA PC NEWS

Review of the September meeting

If I Had A Hammer...

by Jackson Hibler

The closest I ever came to project management was when we added a carport and surrounding porches to our old stone house in Stittsville. We drew elevations to find a pleasing shape to blend in with the roof lines of the house. I worked with a truss manufacturer to make sure the design would carry the snow load...and not blow away in a summer storm! We calculated the materials needed and found a supplier. We had to organize a work-crew of local teenagers and dads that varied from two to five, depending upon what needed doing. I had to plan the work process and make sure the supplies and equipment would be on hand to keep the crew busy. We had to coordinate schedules with the building inspector. We had to arrange to pay the suppliers and crew.

"Fort Hibler" got built on time and on budget that summer: some 800 sq. feet of shelter for

Check the envelope in case it contains other material such as a new membership card.

just under $3,000. Pretty much a peanut project—one that could be planned and executed by a worker-manager and one crew. But at that, it was all I could handle. What if I was building carports for a living...had six crews working, 15 suppliers, two sub-contractors and three municipal building codes to satisfy? What if I was coordinating training seminars involving scores of students and a dozen instructors at three locations? I would need help juggling all those people, places and supplies. That's what project management software is designed to provide. Project management is as old as the pyramids—and how they did it is now lost in the hieroglyphics. "Modern" project management is as old as WWII but still comes festooned with arcane jargon to daunt the novice: a "critical path" to figure out what has to be done and when to get from here to there; "PERT charts" to show the dependent relationships between tasks...flowcharts in effect; "Gantt charts" to show how long each task that forms the critical path will take to finish,

which must start before which, which ones can overlap; and Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) outlines to track the components of each task, the materials, people, and money needed to accomplish them...and the project. The processes of planning, scheduling, budgeting, and coordinating must still be done

as always. But the greater the complexity of the information that must be juggled, the more it begs for an overview or picture that can clarify the management needs of a project. While the paths and charts of modern project management form that picture, the mutable nature of the events that will beset the actual project begs for the power that computing can bring to the task. This is particularly true when the "picture" will change repeatedly throughout the project. Project management software can provide this real-time view.

The essential difference between Symantec's TimeLine for Windows, presented to us by Brian Roach of Wilson & Associates, and the suite of programs shown by Steve Rice of Micro*Frame is one of depth. If your project is bounded by scheduling considerations that would benefit from PERT and Gantt charting, TimeLine for Windows—or its bigger brother, TimeLine for DOS—may be the proper tool for the job. If finance and budget considerations will be continuing through the project, Mi-cro*Frame's WBS system may be more appropriate: it can coordinate bidding, budgeting, and site-management with multiple projects competing for limited resources of people, time and money.

It was obvious from the presentation at our last meeting, however, that the more powerful the software, the more effort will have to be devoted to learning to use it. In fact, at some point, you will probably hire a specialist to use Time-Line for DOS, Microsoft Project for Windows, or Computer Associates' Super Project pro-

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Software library

Review of September's disks

by Norm Dafoe

With two meetings in September, I had to come up with twice as many programs and specialty disks for sale from the club's Software Library. Fortunately, the shareware harvest from the summer provided a lot of choices. Disk of the Month #102 provided:

- **4 Speed**, a graphical disk-transfer-rate test
- **Combi-Disk**, (disk-cache, RAM-disk, and XMS utility)
- various windows utilities (**HotKeys**, **OnTop**, **ShowPif**, and **WinDos**). Check it out!

Specialty disks

Five specialty disks were presented at the September 28 meeting:

- **CAPTURE THE FLAG**: a computerized version of the old school yard games, set on natural terrain viewed from above, animated figures, strategy, and more.
- **DMORF v1.0**: a DOS based morphing program, which allows you to transform one image into another. Also included on this disk is **Win-Morph**, a Windows-based morphing program for high-end PCs (386 33 MHz, 16 Mb, 32 k colours VGA graphics).
- **HOCKEY SCHEDULE 93/94**: displays entire NHL schedule in attractive program for Windows 3.1, including latest schedule changes.
- **PC-PROOF v1.8**: a super-grammar checker, compatible with many word-processor files.
- **WINDOWS 3.1 UTILITIES**: a new collection of useful utilities for Windows 3.1, including **Clipmate for Windows** (clipboard enhancement), **Pulsar for Windows v3.0** (laserjet control), **Startup Swapper Deluxe** (changes desktop on every boot), **Wincover 3.1** (fax cover sheet and more), and **WinBatch v1.01** (file matcher).

As always, I will be at the next meeting with more super shareware disks. Come by and have a look!

YO! The Year of Office, Word for Windows 6, Mozart, and Stravinsky

by Lynda Simons

October 26, Bob Scowcroft, always an entertaining presenter, will be demonstrating the new version of Microsoft Office, some CD-ROMs, and some fun software aimed at kids that will probably make us old folks quite envious.

New version of Office with Word for Windows v.6

By the time you read this, Microsoft will have officially released their new version of Office. This will include version 6 of Word for Windows. No, you didn't miss versions 3, 4, and 5: they're just synchronizing the version number with the Macintosh and DOS versions of Word which are both at six now. Come to think of it, WordPerfect is at six too, so everything will match! Excel, version 5 will be available "shortly" and PowerPoint, version 4 will be available in the spring. So which versions of Excel and PowerPoint will come in the new version of Office?

Consistency between applications

The main focus of the new Office is consistency between applications. Of the nine menu items across the menu bar in the three applications, eight menu items will be the same. Common functions like opening files and printing documents will handle exactly the same in each application in the suite. Except in which versions, Bob? If the new version of Office, which includes ver-

sion six of Word is coming out on October 19, but the new versions of Excel and PowerPoint are to follow, when exactly are we going to see the new uniformity?

Meanwhile Word version 6 sound pretty interesting in its own right. (And I guess it makes sense that they didn't want to hang around for other version 6 packages that might be coming out any time now...)

Anticipating your every foible

This new version of Word for Windows is going to anticipate your needs: it's got Intellisense. Intellisense is a series of features, some of which have existed for a while in other programs such as Excel. Autofill, which enters the rest of the year's months if you enter Jan and Feb in the first two cells in a row or column was an early feature in this series as was Autosum, which adds a column of consecutive figures without your specifically marking them. In Word you can set up your own personal dictionary which will correct your common typing errors on the fly. Or it will allow you to

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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
Tuesday, 26 October	See this page.
Tuesday, 30 November	Swap meet, cafeteria. Please note that there are no SIG meetings on this night.
Tuesday, 14 December	Multimedia presentation from Computer Aided Designs

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Internet at first glance

by Jerry Gault

The National Capital Freenet and Internet have become popular subjects in the media these days. We are lucky enough to have The National Capital Freenet locally and for free. It offers limited Internet services and is a great source of information and services such as E-mail and Gopher. Here is a brief background of what the Internet ("the net") is all about and what services it offers. Internet is a worldwide network of computer networks. It consists of thousands of separately-administered networks of many sizes and types. Each of these networks contains as many as tens of thousands of computers; the total number of individual users of the Internet is in the millions [more than 8,000 networks, 1.3 million computers and 8 million users: ed]. With this level of connectivity comes a high degree of communication, resource sharing, and information access.

Services

Some of the more popular services on the Internet are E-mail, remote logon (telnet), and file transfer protocol (ftp). These basic Internet applications are also building blocks for more sophisticated applications such as Gopher, WAIS, Archie, and World Wide Web—tools that make it easier to locate information on the network.

E-mail is a fast, easy, and economical way to communicate with other Internet users around the world.

Remote Logon (Telnet) is the ability of a computer user in one location to establish an on-line connection with another computer elsewhere.

File Transfer (FTP) locates and transfer files from one Internet-connected computer to another. Gaining access to the Internet is relatively painless. Most large corporations, educational facilities, and the government are connected to the net. Call your system administrator and enquire about opening an account—you might be surprised. There are also Internet service providers that will provide access for a fee including UUNET, Portal Communications Company, and Novalink Information Services. Freenet currently has 69 dial-up modems, all accessed through 780-3733.

Internet service providers

Send E-mail to the following addresses and request information on rates and services available:

- HOLONET: INFO@holonet.net
- HOOKUP: INFO@hookup.com
- INTEREX: INFO@io.org
- NOVALINK: INFO@novalink.com
- PERFORMANCE: INFO@psi.com
- UUNET: INFO@uunet.ca
- UUNORTH: INFO@uunorth.north.net

By the time you read this, I will have uploaded to The PUB a file called intad.txt containing all the mailing addresses for these companies. There is something for everyone on the Internet. It's truly a world-wide experience!

P.S. I welcome any comments about the above information or for future articles.

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type, say, xxx, then press F3 and have xxx replaced with the long phrase or company name or whatever you find tedious to type out repeatedly. It will automatically capitalize the first letter of a new paragraph if you can't be bothered to do it yourself. When you click and drag to mark text it will tidy up after you if you're sloppy. If you miss part of the first or last word, Word grabs the whole word for you. "...and if you only **want** to highlight a just a few letters?" "No problem", Bob assured me, just hold down the Shift-key. Actually, Bob wasn't quite sure if it was the Shift key, but he was sure you could shake off the help if it was unwanted.

So, I wonder how long it will be before I'll be able to say: "Right, Word. What I want to say in this article is ..." and Word will just write it for me! I'm not really sure how I'd feel about that. Meanwhile, as long as I can stay in control it all sounds quite helpful and welcome.

Home sweet home

As usual, Bob won't just be focusing on business applications (and The Year of Office which this is apparently). In a surprising moment of modesty, Bob said Microsoft was **aiming** at becoming a household word. And I guess it's true, but they aren't quite up there with Hoover, Bic, or Kleenex yet. They're seri-

ously looking at the home and the home office market. So he'll be showing us some new versions of old CD-ROMs such as Encarta, Cinemania, and Beethoven. The music series now also includes Mozart and Stravinsky. He will try also to cover new version of Publisher with Designer Pack for Publisher, and a new version of Works. Works is now very powerful with OLE and drag and drop and "many more features than most people could ever hope to use". The software for kids sounds like fun. Instead of plain old menu choices these kid's packages have tools that have animation and sound effects.

OLE, version 2

We'll also get a brief look at the major improvements with OLE version 2. OLE 2 allows drag and drop directly between packages without the aid of the clipboard. And once your object is there you'll be able to edit the object without switching completely into the host application. Now when you click on your imbedded object, say a piece of a spreadsheet from Excel that you've put in a report in Word, you will just change the menu bar and tool bar to Excel's, but the document will stay completely visible. You'll be able to just work on the small piece of the spreadsheet in the context into which you have imbedded it.

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Making multiple copies in WordPerfect 6.0

by Eric Clyde

Would you believe that the easiest way to make one or more copies of text, tables, or graphics is to delete the desired material first!

When material is deleted using one of the techniques described below, a copy is retained in memory in case a mistake was made. Copies of this can be made at any point in the document, or even in another document. (You must use the retained material before deleting other text, as each deletion overwrites the previous one). The technique is useful, for example, when it is necessary to produce similar texts in a number of letters, or to produce numerical tables for different years, but with the same row and column headings. In the latter case, even the formulas are copied—a big time saving!

The deletion must be done either by moving the cursor to the end of the desired material and

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I bought my house via computer

Julie Dustin

Have you heard about Homer? The Ottawa Citizen recently ran an article about buying a house using Homer (Oct.9/93). Homer is the Real Estate Board of Ottawa-Carleton's new computerized version of the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). And proof that such a database is useful—I am, once again, the proud owner of a mortgage thanks to a distant cousin of Homer.

This experience makes me realize that computerized databases can already help the average consumer. But do real estate agents realize what a threat this could mean to their livelihood? How long before the MLS is an on-line service for the public (free or otherwise)? The sooner, the better if you ask me.

Looking takes time

We, the mortgage-owners-to-be, thought we could avoid using a sales agent when we first started looking for a house. We figured we could negotiate successfully without an agent. However, it took time to comb through all the ads finding houses that had some or all of the features we wanted. Eventually we signed up with a sales agent with Royal LePage. She, with over 10 years experience in the business and with the help of her company's computerized home database, did sell us a house.

Touch that screen

At our first few meetings, I sat at the system's keyboard myself (being a pushy client) and with the easy interface of a touch screen (or a mouse) entered the number of bedrooms, bathrooms, and the price range we wanted. Other selection criteria included fireplaces, hardwood floors, finished basements, and so on (that's easy for a database, you're probably saying). Yes but then....while the three-dimensional cube turned, the CD-based system selected the houses complete with frontal photos of the house. And you could see your future neighbours, on both sides or across the street. The agent could then print out the photos, all the information about each house and an area map.

You're on film

According to our agent, every house in the city can be seen, even yours! Your dwelling was videotaped in 1991 then converted to stills for this software (eerie or what?) If we had had access to this system as an individual, looking for a house would have been much easier on our own. Just think of the deal we might have had! Now, if only the computer would handle all the arrangments with the bank, the lawyers, the insurance agent, the renovations......

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holding the backspace key until all of it has disappeared, or putting the cursor at the beginning and using the Block command (F12 or Alt-D4) and arrow keys, to highlight the desired material, then backspacing. The text will disappear, but don't worry—the last three deleted blocks are held in memory. Hit the Escape key, and the text will reappear with "1. Restore", "2. Previous deletion" or "Cancel". As promised, hitting the "1" key will restore the deleted text. However, this does not erase it from the memory, and additional copies can be made at other points in your document by moving the cursor to that point, hitting the Escape key, and entering "1" to restore. Unfortunately, calculations in tables are not done immediately—either choose Tables from the Layout menu, then select Calculate all, or use Alt+F7 (Tables), and choose "2. Tables", then "5. Calculate all".

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Understanding your system: part 2, floppy disks and hard disks

by Eric Clyde

In last month's article, brief descriptions of the computer chips used in IBM computers and the clones were give, along with a discussion of memory (RAM).

Having lots of RAM in your computer can be very useful, but as soon as you switch off the computer (or there is a power surge) all of your work vanishes. Unless you use your computer exclusively for the playing of games or are connected to a network, it is extremely important that you have a more permanent means of storing data. This usually consists of one or more floppy disks and a hard disk, but there are also various newer methods, such as Bernoulli drives, floptical disks, and tape backup units.

Floppy disks

Since almost all new programmes come on floppy disks, at least one floppy disk drive is essential. The types currently available are 5.25-inch in a flexible (floppy) container, and the 3.5-inch in a rigid (but still called floppy) container. (There is also a combined 3.5- and 5.25-inch drive on the market.)

The 5.25-inch drives (and disks) are available in two formats—DD ("double density"

maximum capacity 360 kb) and HD ("high density" with a maximum capacity of 1.2 Mb). The 3.5-inch comes in three formats—DD (720 kb max.), HD (1.44 Mb max.) and, more rarely, ED ("Extra high density", 2.88 Mb max.)

Note that floppy disks should always be formatted to their designated capacity and not forced beyond that capacity. In 5.25-inch format, the DD disk drive uses an older technology than the HD format, and requires almost twice as much magnetic field strength and track width to record data. Floppy disks are relatively cheap—it is poor economy to try to format DD disks as if they were high density. At best, it may work for some time, but magnetic strength slowly decreases and eventually the data will be unreadable. Also some HD drives have trouble reading DD disks.

Hard disks

Nowadays, most computers use hard disks (called fixed disks by IBM) for storage. These are sealed units, with several disks spinning at high speed (usually about 3,600 rpm). The types currently available are IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics) and SCSI (Small Computer System Interface). Both are proven technologies.

IDE drives dominate the market up to about 500MB, and SCSI drives above that size. IDE drives tend to be cheaper on a cost-per-Mb basis; SCSI drives have the theoretical advantage that other devices, such as CD/ROM drives can use the same controller, but frequently there seem to be compatibility problems.

The major considerations should be the size of the drive and the average [track-to-track] access time. Buy the largest drive you can afford, with the fastest track access time (smaller numbers are most important here—15 ms (millisecond) is very good, 12 ms is better!) And, of course, the warranty period offered by the manufacturer or dealer shows the confidence they have in the drive.

Some hard disks also have caching controllers. These are buffers which perform a function similar to cache memory in RAM, and can improve the performance.

The only other point I wish to make about hard disks is that they contain the only moving parts in most microcomputers. The distances between tracks containing information is very small (frequently 1,000 tracks-per-inch or more), so hard disks should be handled care-

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Learning how *continued from page 7*

fully—don't bump them or drop them. With care, they will last for many years in normal use.

To be continued next month. If you have any questions, bring them to the next Beginners' Group meeting, or phone me at 749-2387.

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Review *continued from page 2*

grams...just as you might want a draftsman or architect to work with Autocad for large design projects.

I suspect many of us who could really use project management software remain more daunted than encouraged by the prospect. Perhaps we should begin with TimeLine's little brother: OnTarget. If we start out with a simpler but still useful tool, we will soon be in a better position to decide which power tool best suits our needs.

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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
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☐ Software library
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MEMBERSHIP FEE $ 25.00

Disk of the month subscription ___
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3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ont. K2G 1S6