Review of the October meeting

OLE! Microsoft does more than NT!

Jackson Hibler

After all the hype and hoopla these days about NT, it was something of a surprise—and a relief—to discover at Microsoft's presentation last month that NT was "Not There"!

Instead, it looks like a previous item of considerable hoopla—DDE—is finally coming into its own. You may recall the interlinked world of applications that DDE was to usher in some years ago. There were more links missing than made in that early specification, but the direction and the promise were beguiling. Well, DDE begat OLE and OLE begat OLE 2.0 and now, at last, Microsoft figures they understand OLE well enough to incorporate it into its new linked software suite—*Microsoft Office 4.0*.

MO40 will incorporate new versions of *Word for Windows (6.0)* and *MS Mail* (3.2?)—both ready now—with *Power Point* and *Excel*—ready "real soon now"—and *Access*—ready when you want to pay extra for it—with a set of office manager tools all using a consistent interface and shared components. It may seem that this brings us back around the

carousel to "integrated software" like *Framework, Symphony* and the *Smart System*. But MO40 is more than *Works for Windows* in mega-mode. Instead of integrating various functions into one program, OLE allows Microsoft—and the user, if all works as advertised—to "cherry pick" from diverse (but cooperating) applications and apply the desired functions of each to the task at hand.

What this has allowed Microsoft to do is give the user access to its spreadsheet "engine" (borrowed from *Excel* as needed) and/or its macro machine (borrowed from *Visual Basic*) "on demand" from another—OLE-cooperating— application...like *Word*, or *Access*, or...*Ami Pro*?

OLE is promoted as an "open" specification that the likes of Lotus and WordPerfect should be able to tie into. Obviously there are "competitive reasons" (OK...pride) why other software houses may be reluctant to join in...but complaints also occasionally surface that Microsoft may not really want to let them join in. Whether Microsoft has "come clean" or not on the nitty-gritty of OLE

2.0 implementation, and some competitors say not, it would seem to me to be in Microsoft's long-term interest to get everyone on board. Rather, I suspect that even Microsoft has been in the "learning" phase of OLE implementation rather longer than they thought they might be. If so, MO40 looks like their graduation debut. If it works as well as Bob

NEXT MEETING : **TUESDAY, November 30, 1993** *details on p. 3*

OLE! *continued from front page*

Scowcroft and Blair Spencer made it seem to work, then it may well be Microsoft's OLE graduation masterpiece...one that will pose a serious threat to WordPerfect and Lotus in the office. We'll see!

IntelliSense

Touted with equal enthusiasm was "IntelliSense". In the continuing software bells and whistles contest, the user has become overwhelmed with a tangle of cords to pull and buttons to push. Surveys show that only a small, and basic, set of features of most word processing and spreadsheet packages are actually used by the average individual—mostly because it takes too long to study, try, test, and try again. Many of us use the most simple workarounds to do tasks that are already implemented in superior ways...if only we knew about 'em...if only we were not too busy to take the time to look for them.

IntelliSense is targeted at this problem with three approaches. First it watches what you are doing and either jumps to what you need automatically (at what disruption for the surprise I worry about), or suggests easier ways to get there (I like the sound of that). Second it has walk-through assistants that you can call in to help you build a better mail merge, etc. Finally it has a "tip-of-the-day" feature, which couldn't be any worse than the insipid, platitudinous aphorisms some of us find displayed by our systems when we boot up or read our e-

mail...could it? At any rate the proof of IntelliSense will be in the using. Again, we'll see!

Home front

In addition to the office, the home user is obviously a Microsoft target if the volume of new items shown by Blair and Bob is any sample.

It looks like Microsoft may be learning to accept standards as well as set them. Their sound card is now Sound Blaster compatible. Better late than never! Their microphone/voice control system, however, still sounds like "never".

What looks and sounds better and better, however is CD-ROM. Microsoft can be credited with promoting CD-ROM from the beginning, and with some hundred titles, it is obviously committed to the media. We got a sample of *Encarta, Dinosaurs, Stravinsky, Cinemania*...quite frankly I think it's time I invested in a CD-ROM!

Finally, there was one operating system discussed at the meeting: DOS. Hot on the heels of IBM DOS 6.1 and Novell's (DR) DOS comes MS-DOS 6.2! It looks like 6.2 has filled in a few holes in 6.0...like tape backup in the (Norton) backup component...better tools and an undo facility for TroubleSp-(er) DoubleSpace...and improved operating safety and CD-ROM support for SMARTDRV users. If it is not available through the PUB, you can buy it from Microsoft or a reseller for a nominal fee. Get it!

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Swap Meet, November 30th

by Eric Clyde and Julie Dustin

November 30 is your chance to buy that extra hard drive (just in case) or the missing printer cable. It's also a great way to sell off any unused software or hardware that is cluttering up your work space or basement. The swap meet will take place in the cafeteria at Sir Robert Borden (2nd floor) from 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. If you have something to sell, call and reserve a table with Eric Clyde (749-2387). If you decide at the last minute to sell something, bring it in! See Eric at table A1 (near the front door) for a space. Buyers, bring lots of cash (and your chequebook) because there are great deals to be had.

Seller information

- Buyers will be primarily interested in DOS-based computers and peripherals. In previous years, people have tried to sell Atari computers and TRS80's without success. But you never know who might be interested in

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, 30 November	See this page.
Tuesday, 14 December	Multimedia
Tuesday, 25 January	Lotus

that old version of QuattroPro or a monochrome monitor.

- This is a non-commercial event (no dealers, please).
- The tables will be arranged in groups of 10, four per side and one on each end. Each seller can have use a full or half table, space permitting. Each group is given a letter (A,B,C, etc.) and tables are numbered from 1- 10.
- Label your hardware as working or non-working.
- Sell only software that you own a licence for and have stopped using (older versions from which you have upgraded are not allowed).
- Bring your own (long) extension cords and power bars if you want to demonstrate your computer or peripheral.
- Bring cash to make change.

Timetable

The schedule is as follows:

- 7:00: table layout
- 7:15: sellers admitted to set up their tables
- 7:30: doors open - buyers allowed in (members and non-members)
- 9:30: cleanup

I welcome any volunteers for help with the setup (please arrive at 7:00) - you also get to see the products first. Volunteers and sellers are also needed to clean up at 9:30 p.m.

Reserve ahead

While tables don't have to be reserved in advance, if you do so, you will get one of the best locations. To reserve, send Eric Clyde a message via the PUB or call him at 749-2387.

Note: there will be no SIG meetings that night.

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E-mail emoticons

Here are some emoticons that you can use in e-mail messages (we won't make you guess what they mean). To see the figures, turn this page 90 degrees to the right. (Ed: does this mean we should turn our monitor sideways to read our e-mail messages?)

`:)~D`	`smile/coffee`	`:-x`	`sealed lips`
`:-)`	`smile`	`=:-)`	`punk-rocker`
`:-(`	`displeasure`	`0)`	`diver`
`;-)`	`wink`	`o-)`	`cyclopse`
`:->`	`smug`	`*<|:->`	`santa claus`
`:-|`	`asleep`	`:-()`	`Mick Jagger`
		`:{=`	`walrus`

Are they worth it?

by Harald Freise

Does your 486SX crawl redrawing your CorelDRAW screen? Are you tired of waiting for your 486DX33 to recalculate a large Quattro Pro spreadsheet? Is Windows running kind of slow? Do you want to change your 386 into a 486?

If you already have 16 MB of memory and an accelerated video card, then have I got an solution for you: an upgrade of the CPU (central processing unit) microprocessor chip. One manufacturer, Cyrix, claims more than a 200% improvement in performance over the original chip. What it translates to in real terms is performance that you can feel and see. Programs and processes plainly just run faster!

For 486DX machines

Intel's Overdrive chip doubles the internal processing while retaining the same standard external speed of the motherboard. The Overdrive processor boosts both internal integer and floating point performance while maintaining 100% compatibility with Intel's 486DX processor and PC software. The Intel 486DX2 Overdrive upgrade chip comes in two configurations. Both are meant as an upgrade for 486DXs, depending on whether you have an additional 169 pin chip socket or must replace the existing 168 pin chip. Included with the 168 pin Overdrive chip is a microprocessor removal tool and an antistatic storage box for the original chip. The installation manual is thorough and Intel provides faxback technical support. There is even a diskette that contains a previews of the entire installation process, and even has diagnostics to check things out after the installation. Intel claims performance increases of 79% over the original chip.

The only hassle I've had so far was upgrading a very early production 486 motherboard, when I had to upgrade the BIOS to get the machine to work correctly.

At street prices of $575+ (25 MHz) and $750+ (33 MHz), there are three models available:

- Overdrive 486DX-33 for 486DX-33 MHz processors with an Overdrive Socket169 pin
- ODP486DX33 for 486DX-33 MHz processors without an Overdrive Socket168 pin
- ODP486DX25 for 486DX-25 MHz processors without an Overdrive Processor Socket

For 486Sxs

For 486SX computers there are also Overdrive upgrades available. These chips essentially upgrade the 486SX microprocessor to a 486DX of comparable speed. They also gain the math coprocessor missing prior to the upgrade. Again the installation is extremely easy, well documented, and 100% compatible.

At street prices of $440+ (20 MHz), $590+ (25 MHz), and $775+ (33MHz), there are three models available:

- Overdrive Processor SX20 MHz for Intel 486SX-20 CPU based systems
- Overdrive Processor SX25 MHz for Intel 486SX-25 CPU based systems
- Overdrive Processor SX33 MHz for Intel 486SX-33 CPU with or without socket

For 386DXs

Cyrix has an interesting 386DX to 486 Microprocessor upgrade option. These are intended for 16, 20, and 25MHz 386DX processors. Their solution is a single-chip replacement and uses Cyrix's implementation of a clock-doubled 486-compatible instruction set. The internal cache, used to provide internal data integrity between the upgrade chip and main memory, is 1 K versus the 8 K cache standard in the Intel products. This is unique to the Cyrix chip since the original 386DX didn't have an internal cache memory and 386 motherboards didn't support processors with internal caches. The upgrade comes with a good manual, chip removal tools, and software used to configure the on-chip cache. Performance claims are from 100 to more than 200% in-

crease in speed over the original chip. At street prices of $335+ (16 MHz), $390+ (20 MHz), and $450+(25 MHz), there are also three models available:

- Cx486DRx2-16/32 for 386DX-16 MHz CPU based systems
- Cx486DRx2-20/40 for 386DX-20 MHz CPU based systems
- Cx486DRx2-25/50 for 386DX-25 MHz CPU based systems

Easy process

These upgrades are very easy to do. Most of the upgrades I've done so far have taken less than 15 minutes. The only time that it takes any longer is if the original processor is positioned in an awkward or inaccessible place within the computer necessitating the removal of the motherboard. For the faint of heart, your local computer shop should be able to replace the chip with very little additional cost.

But is it worth it?

I really do have to question the pricing of the upgrade microprocessor chips. A new good quality 486DX266 MHz clone motherboard, complete with a microprocessor and 256K cache, is about $830 on the street. Does upgrading a 486SX-33 to a 486DX-33 with a $775 Overdrive chip (perhaps voiding an extended warranty) make more sense than installing a brand new 486DX2-66 motherboard with a 2 year warranty? On the other hand, if you have a brand name computer and don't want to replace it with a clone and the microprocessor upgrade doesn't void your warranty this may be for you. The decision would be so much easier if the upgrade chips were half the price. Check it out.

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Election notice

Nominations for the election of new club officers must be in the hands of Doug Poulter (past chairman) by November 30. You can nominate either yourself, or another person (who must accept the nomination). There are five positions open for nomination:

- Chairman
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Membership Chairman
- Convenor

The Sysop, Software Librarian, Hardware/software Broker, and Newsletter Editor are appointed positions.

The intentions of the current elected executive are as follows:

- Harald Freise, current chairman, is willing to stand again as Chairman
- Stan McRoberts, current Treasurer, is willing to stand again as Treasurer
- Robert Parkinson has recently resigned as Secretary
- Mark Cayer, Membership Chairman, is willing to stand again as Membership Chairman
- Lynda Simons, Convenor, is not willing to stand as Convenor, but is willing to stand as Secretary

The intentions of the current appointees is as follows:

- Chris Taylor, current Sysop, is willing to continue as Sysop
- Norman Dafoe, current Software Librarian, is willing to continue as Software Librarian
- Chris Seal, current Newsletter Editor, is willing to continue as Newsletter Editor

There is only one elected position for which no one is standing:

- Convenor

The positions are described in detail in the constitution, which can be downloaded from the PUB. If you are interested in competing for any position, and would like more information about what is involved, you can speak with any member of the executive by phone, or on the PUB.

Doug Poulter is looking for two non-executive club members to review the club's records and financial statements prior to the publication of the Financial Report which is due to be published in January. Also, Doug would like volunteers to assist in an election should two or more people be nominated for the same position.

Electronic mail around the world with Internet

Jerry Gault

Among the many services offered by Internet is electronic mail, commonly known as e-mail. It's a great way to send and receive messages from around the world and is used heavily by Internet subscribers. Not only can you send messages to other internet users, you can send e-mail to other networks such as Compuserve, Fidonet, Bitnet and others.

@SUBHEAD =Forums for discussion
E-mail has other uses besides correspondence between network users. You may want to join a list and receive e-mail messages on a specific subject as they are posted by other subscribers of the list worldwide. Lists allow like-minded individuals to form groups for discussing problems, arguing issues and sharing solutions.

Addresses and gateways

Internet's e-mail system is similar to Canada Post but much faster. It's a store-and-forward type of service ; you compose and send a message and it travels from network to network through application gateways. These gateways reformat a message so it will pass through each network in proper form onto the other networks and finally arrive at its destination. Your e-mail address contains information on how to reach the gateways and how to deliver the mail on the other side. An Internet e-mail address looks similar to one of the following:

- ae306@freenet.carleton.ca
- jgault@bigcat.missouri.edu.

The form of an address is "login-name@machine-name". All mail addresses must include a domain name and a machine name that are acting as a mail agent. When a mail message reaches the named machine the network's job is done. It's up to that computer to deliver the message further to the actual person the message is addressed too.

For example, the e-mail address **ae306@freenet.carleton.ca** sends mail to ae306 (login name) and the machine name freenet.carleton.ca.

Effective e-mail messages:

Here are ten tips for sending messages that are to the point and politically correct:

1. Keep paragraphs and messages short and to the point. If you must write a long message, allow for clear space: it makes it easier to read and focus on one subject per message.
2. E-mail is not private once received on the other end as it can easily be forwarded.
3. Capitalize only when you wish to highlight an important point. Using capitals throughout your message makes it hard to read and is considered a form of shouting.
4. Be careful when using sarcasm and humour. Without face-to-face communication your joke may be seen as a criticism.
5. Include your signature file at the bottom of your message. The file should consist of your name, internet address, and possibly your city, province, and country. Keep a signature file short: it should not exceed four lines.
6. Abbreviate when possible but use only accepted short forms. It's of no use abbreviating if the recipient can't understand your message. Some examples of accepted short forms are:

- IMHO = in my humble/honest opinion
- FYI = for your information
- BTW = by the way
- FLAME = antagonistic criticism

7. Respect copyrights and license agreements and cite all quotes, references, and sources.
8. Don't write and send a message in haste. You will probably regret writing it the next day. Take time to think about what you want to say, then send it.
9. When quoting another person, edit out whatever isn't directly applicable to your reply. Including the entire article will annoy those reading it.
10. Check your message for spelling mistakes and proper grammar.

Understanding your system: part 3, monitors and video cards

by Eric Clyde

The video display system consists of the monitor and the video card inside the computer. These work together to form the picture on the screen.

If you look closely at the screen of your monitor, you can see that the image is made of a large number of tiny dots, called pixels. In colour monitors, each pixel is produced at the convergence of three beams of electrons in a cathode ray tube, each beam corresponding to one of the primary colours. Different coloured pixels are produced from beams of different intensity. Pixel size can vary on different monitors. For sharp images, a small pixel size is desirable—you should aim for .31 mm or less.

The image on the screen is produced one pixel at a time by these converging beams travelling across the screen, one row at a time, until the picture is completed. This redrawing of the screen, called the "refresh rate", happens 70 times per second (Hz) or even more frequently. In some systems, the screen image is generated in two passes of the electron beams—the first forms the odd number rows, the second does the even rows. This is call "interlacing", which can cause screen flicker and consequent eye fatigue. "Non-interlaced" monitors with a refresh rate of at least 70 Hz are preferred.

VGA and SuperVGA

The most common type of monitor currently available is SVGA (SuperVGA), although VGA monitors (and cards) are still around. VGA stands for Video Graphics Array, the type of video card inside the computer. (It should match the monitor attached—VGA monitors with VGA cards; SVGA monitors with SVGA cards). In the VGA system, there are 640 pixels in each row, and 480 rows on the screen, hence the designation "640x480"; SVGA monitors have even higher resolution, 800x600; and some monitors can display 1024x768 pixels and higher. VGA cards and monitors have "8-bit" displays, i.e., 8 bits of information can be handled at a time, allowing up to 256 colours in one screen image. SVGA systems can have much higher capabilities: a "15-bit" adapter can display 32,768 col-ours; a "16-bit" adapter can produce 65,736 colours; and a "24-bit" adapter can show 16.7 million colours (also called "true colour", for images can look very realistic).

So why don't we all just rush out and buy good SVGA or better monitors and 24-bit colour cards? Most popular programs do not use this colour capability—essentially only graphic artists and professional image editors require it. Another reason is that, at 1024x768 resolution, 2.36 megabytes of data has to be handled each time the screen is refreshed. For acceptable performance, this requires a super fast video card with lots of video memory on it. Such a card and a good SVGA monitor can be expensive.

Due to space limitations, this article has only skimmed the surface of the topic. If you are interested in more information, the November issue of the *Computer Paper* has quite a nice detailed summary, starting on p.9. *PC World*, November issue has a brief note on pp. 212, 218. Also, the February 1993 issue of *PC Computing* has some very clear diagrams showing how a VGA monitor works.

Remember that there will not be a Beginner's SIG this month because of the Swap Meet. If you have any questions, phone me at 749-2387.

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Internet *continued from page 6*

E-mail is a great way to get your message to one or more persons quickly, in remote places, and is accessible at any time. Properly used, it is a powerful tool.

Look for an article in the near future, from Dave Loan of the National Capital Freenet, which will give us further background on FreeNet

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Software library

Super software sale

by Norman Dafoe

In keeping with the mood of super software and hardware bargains at the **November Swap Meet**, the Software Library will again hold a **CLEAROUT SALE**. All the shareware disks in our software library will be marked down in price. This will result in **ULTRA-BARGAINS** which surely cannot be beat! All the same great quality at a new, new price!

Older diskettes will be marked down 50%-66% to **$1** or **$1.50** for 360 KB diskettes. Diskettes which were produced this year will be a **DOLLAR** off. Tremendous bargains! And I will be open to any reasonable offers on bulk purchases.

I will bring along my ancient portable with the **Software Library Database**, which will make it a snap to find exactly what you are looking for. The whole operation will be self-serve so you can browse to your heart's content. I will be there, as always, to help you out.

So come along to the Software Library table and save a little money on shareware diskettes. It is all in a good cause—our club. See you there.

P.S. There will be no *new* Specialty disks or Disk of the Month in November, but we will resume normal operations in December.

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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