OTTAWA PC NEWS

Review of April's general meeting

The Internet and teenage sex

by Howard Ball

''Everyone's talking about it, few are doing it, and fewer still are doing it well".

Those members who attended last month's meeting were treated to this well-known description of adolescent sexuality not once, but twice, during the course of the meeting. For both of the meeting's presenters, the analogy between teenage sex and the Internet was apparently too good to resist, and who could blame them? Those of us who are relative newcomers to cyberspace (on the one hand) and with relatively good memories (on the other!) will find it easy to appreciate the similarities.

NSTN

The first presenter of the evening was Bill St. Arnaud of NSTN Inc., possibly Canada's largest commercial Internet service provider. Bill opened his presentation with a brief overview of the Net, giving us a clear sense of the vast numbers of users (in excess of 20 million) and countries (more than 67) hooked up to each other through the Net (more about these figures later!). As he pointed out, both business

and individual users can make use of the Net to save themselves money in a number of ways. For example, when you can use the Internet to E-mail or fax a friend or colleague for a fraction of the cost of regular fax or long-distance, you can, in a very short time, save some very significant money. And by signing up with NTSN ($25/month for individuals, $250/month for businesses) you can avoid one of the common problems encountered when you use a free service provider (such as the National Capital Freenet)—the busy signal.

Strangelove Internet Enterprises

The next presenter of the evening was Lindsay Fraser of Ottawa's own Strangelove Internet Enterprises, a local publishing and training firm. After the compulsory teen sex/Internet analogy, Lindsay began by giving us some statistics on world-wide Internet users, countries involved, and the like. Immediately, I sensed something was wrong—all of Lindsay's figures were different from Bill's! As it turned out, however, they were both right—which figures you come up with depends on, for exam-

ple, whether or not you count users/countries with full (as opposed to partial) access to Internet services. This apparent contradiction only serves to underscore the fact that the Internet, like everything else in the world of computing, is evolving and changing faster than we can track.

Lindsay went on to give us a most entertaining and informa-

NEXT MEETING : **MONDAY, May 30, 1994** *details on p. 3*

What!—no specialty disks?

by Norman Dafoe

Members may have noticed that there were no new Specialty Disks in the software library in April 1994. This is probably the first time in several years that this has happened and it represents a change in tune with the times. Of course, the Disk-of-the-Month was available as usual.

Specialty disks, which are diskettes containing shareware or freeware programs related to one specialty or subject, have been a feature of the OPCUG Software Library for a long time. They are created by the software librarian who downloads a lot of software from other BBSs, then tests, selects, formats, copies, and offers for sale at the general OPCUG meetings. Generally five or six new diskettes are offered each month, some of which sell out, some of which accumulate unsold. Gross sales have been about $200 a month, with about half of that as profit for the club.

In times past, when few club members had modems (too slow and expensive), and when shareware software was hard to find, the 360 kb diskettes offered by the club were an important source of software for many members, including myself. Most software packages would fit on one or two diskettes, updates came at long intervals, and sales were quite brisk. In the eighties, this was the normal way to get software.

However we are now at the nineties. Many OPCUG members have fast modems, which are now really quite cheap; most are familiar with logging onto the PUB or FreeNet, and the use of shareware is quite widespread. Sales of OPCUG software diskettes have not kept up with the growth in club membership and are gently declining.

On the other hand, the workload in preparing diskettes is as heavy as ever. There is much more in the way of shareware with similar functionality available, making selection more difficult; updates arrives more frequently, and the size of shareware packages has increased greatly. I have been spending 2 to 3 full days a month preparing diskettes, and I find that the only ones that sell these days are games! It is discouraging to say the least. There are now so many programs offered, some quite specialized, that it is hard to find the standard stuff that everyone should have.

I propose that the club switch from distributing physical Specialty diskettes to exchanging information and recommendations about shareware through the PUB. I foresee a special message area on the PUB where I, and others, can post messages regarding our discoveries in the shareware arena, along with recommendations, reviews, cautions, notices of updates, etc. Since the General message is now really quite busy, a separate SHAREWARE message area would allow users to quickly scan messages related to this topic only.

Because of the ongoing commitment we have for Disk-of-the-Month subscribers, I propose to continue providing this diskette each month, but to make it a High-Density diskette, 5.25 inch or 3.5 inch, containing a wider selection of software. The price, at least for this year, would remain the same.

I realize that this change may adversely affect some out-of-town members or those currently not using a modem. For some time, the club has been providing assistance in helping people get online, and this change may be an added incentive. For those living outside of the Ottawa-Hull dialling district, I can only suggest a high-speed modem.

I would appreciate any comments about this proposal, either through the PUB (address NORMAN DAFOE) or at home (evenings) at 723-1909 or 723-9345.

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Corel & Ventura present

by Julie Dustin

The first showing of Corel's new direction for Ventura will be a feast for our eyes indeed. On Monday, May 30, Denise Zutrauen and Kevin Rheault from Corel Corporation will be giving us a preview of CorelDraw 5.0 and Ventura 5.0. You see, the graphic software and the publishing software are travelling as a team now (a.k.a. "bundled software" in the industry).

What's new

Zutrauen, product specialist for Corel, describes the pairing as follows. "The interfaces of both products provides greater usability for novices and experts alike. We've added tabbed dialog boxes, rollups menus, a better font management system and fun, new features such as special lens effects and power clipping."

"Power clipping gives the ability to paste one object shape into another. The lens effects include adding colours or tints to parts of or the whole object. You can also create transparent effects," she adds. "Live dimensioning is great for technical illustrators. They can resize objects and everything will adjust properly and automatically."

Font management

Ventura and CorelDRAW's handling of text will be improved with a font substitution technique which is reputed to be a more standardized way for handling fonts. One might say "what we see (on screen) is what we'll get (on paper)". With over 800 fonts available, Corel has tried to improve on the font management problems by adding FontMinder. A minimum number of fonts will be installed with Corel (saving you precious drive space) and when you need another font, just access the CD.

Coloured glass

And in keeping with the interior decorating trend of the year, a "glass block" effect can actually be done on the computer with one of CorelDRAW's modules, Photo-PAINT. What's more, even if you can't be a morph (like a few Star Trek characters), you can apply morphing to images. This technique will show a smooth transition from one image to another (like changing a child's balloon into a hot air balloon on the same page).

A common colour management system is now in place in DRAW to handle the new colour environment. As Zutrauen explains, "the software can more accurately calibrate your monitor and printer which makes colour separations more accurate." Considering the move towards more colour printers and photocopiers, such a system is needed and we will probably see more changes yet in this area in the near future.

Pricing

Now that you've heard about some of the wonderful features...get ready for the price. For a first-time buyer, the suggested retail price is $1,195 Cdn. for the bundled software. All the CorelDRAW modules are included along with Ventura 5.0.

Come out and get morphed. Some great prizes are also going to be given away on May 30—not that OPCUG members would come out for anything but to satisfy their never-ending thirst for more technical knowledge.

Note: Inly Systems will also be on hand to take part in the presentation.

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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
Monday, 30 May	See this page
TUESDAY, 28 June	Database comparison. This meeting is to be held in Kanata. The address and a map will be provided in the next newsletter.
July	No meeting

Fox SIG

by Andrew Ross MacNeill

On the May 5th meeting, we showcased Fox-Fire! and FoxExpress, two incredibly powerful applications that make it much easier to be a database developer. We also showed PTX Editor, a brand new public domain tool by Ken Levy. This tool has been posted on the PUB and will be shown in more detail at the June meeting.

June topic : Multi-window programming

The next meeting of the Ottawa Fox User Group will be June 23rd at the Jean Talon Building at Statistics Canada. We will be showing FoxPro 2.6 and some of the newer features within as well as having a very special presentation by Dick Bard, author of FoxPro Event-Driven Programming (Brady), and popular DevCon speaker. Dick will be speaking on multi-window programming in what promises to be a very exciting presentation.

Dick Bard has appeared as a speaker on event-driven programming at dB-Expo in San Francisco, the Fox Developer's Conference, and at user groups and conferences across the continent.

Database applications developed using FoxPro's multi-window event-driven programming capabilities offer far more than just surface dazzle. Letting users put different blocks of information side-by-side in separate windows, as they need them, allows them to find patterns and connections which otherwise they might have overlooked—and which no programmer could have anticipated and provided for in conventional, fixed-screen applications. This lets them use their information more effectively and more intuitively. This multi-window programming capability is ultimately as significant as FoxPro's remarkable speed. And like that speed, it opens many opportunities to database application developers.

This session will introduce the basic techniques of a "message-based" approach to designing multi-window applications. Source code for a sample multi-window program will be made available to people attending this session. Full source code for the system demonstrated at this session is available in Dick Bard's book, FoxPro Event-Driven Programming.

Come to the June meeting to find out more about this exciting topic!

Fox firsts

On June 3rd and 4th, Val Matisson will be putting on Fox-Teach, the Canadian FoxPro Developers' Conference at the Prince Hotel in Toronto. This year's conference will feature many firsts, including a Q&A session featuring Lisa Slater, and an Application Builder session where Alan Schwartz will show you how to build an entire application from scratch within an hour.

To register or get more information on FoxTeach, call 1-800-265-1362. Registration is $429 Canadian for two information-packed days. Registration is limited so call Fox-Teach now if you haven't already registered.
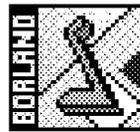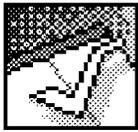
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Internet news

by Jerry Gault

Compuserve customers can now log-in to their accounts from the Internet by telnetting to **compuserve.com**. According to Compuserve, this will cut down on customer long distance charges. Members can access using the Compuserve Information Manager (CIM) or their favourite communication package. For anyone wishing to join Compuserve, online registration is available to non-members who access via telnet. Rates remain the same for access by telnet. For more information contact Compuserve at 1-800-848-8199.

OTTAWA PARADOX USERS GROUP

by Larry Chop

At the April meeting, Nick Potter gave a presentation on using a template form in Paradox for Windows. A template is a generic form that is used as the starting point for developing all the custom forms for an application. Nick showed the ObjectPAL code that he has added to the form-level built-in methods in his template form. Employing a template form speeds up the creation of new forms and helps all forms in an application behave in a consistent way.

The presentation was well received in spite of technical problems—2 lap tops, overhead display unit, overhead projector AND NO BULBS!!!!—oh well.

To take advantage of this newsletter and its mid-month's publishing date for publicity of the meetings, it was agreed that when it becomes possible, the meetings be held on the first Wednesday of the month. Unfortunately, the Museum is booked for the remainder of the year for those days so we will continue with the third Wednesday of the month.

The next meeting will be on May 18 at the Museum of Science and Technology, St Laurent Ave., Ottawa, in the Yellow Room. (unfortunately, the newsletter schedule is intended to get the newsletter to club members in the week immediately prior to the general meeting, which is the week after the regularly scheduled OPUG meeting: Ed.). The main topic will be a demonstration of third party PfW software: Retrieve—a report on-line processor and Object-Spy—a PfW application documentation suite of functions.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

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Membership news

Correct addresses ensure receipt of newsletter

by Mark Cayer, Membership Chairman

By now you all have realized our "change in direction" as to our newsletter mailing—bulk as opposed to first class mail. This change has saved quite a bit of labour for club members as well as some money for the club, but it has also introduced a new level of complexity.

The club's mailing list is now handled by the printer via computer address files. As a result any Postal Code not recognized by the printer's computer (which uses Canada Post files updated on a regular basis) will be rejected and a newsletter not mailed. I have asked the printer to supply me with the reject list each month and I will attempt to have a newsletter forwarded to any member who misses out because of this "problem".

To date the problem is very small—only 8 rejects last month out of over 850 addresses—and to keep it that way club members are asked to be sure to send any change of address notices (especially Postal Code changes) to the club as soon as possible.

The club's mailing list must be made ready for the monthly newsletter early in the month, usually before the 10th, and so if your membership expires on say April 30th—and you don't renew until May 10th by mail—you may miss out on that month's mailing. Please feel free to renew by mail early IN THE MONTH THAT YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES, or at the general meeting for that month.

Thank you all for your co-operation.

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SGML: making documents interchangeable

by Gerry Bourguignon

*Both Microsoft's **Cinemania**, and the Internet World Wide Web viewer **Mosaic** are applications that use SGML, or a subset, in the process of bringing their hypertext links and document format to your computer. In this article, Gerry Bourguignon introduces SGML.*

What was referred to as "the quiet revolution" only a few years ago has been getting a lot of attention lately. SGML is the Standard Generalized Markup Language, an international standard (ISO 8879: 1986) for text interchange. SGML, as it exists today, is the result of over twenty-five years of work in the area of generic coding. SGML facilitates the interchange of documents between various platforms and applications by separating a document's logical structure from its format or appearance.

Logical structures

All documents, from a one-page memorandum to a technical manual of several chapters, have a logical structure. Memoranda typically include a recipient or recipients, a sender or senders, a body made up of one or more paragraphs, and a closing signature. Manuals are made up of chapters, chapters of sections, sections of paragraphs, and so on. A document's structure is implied by its format or visual properties. Chapter headings may appear as Helvetica Bold 18 point while section headings are represented by Helvetica 14 point, indented 3 picas from the left margin, for example. This method of conveying the hierarchy of a document works well for the reader, but it means little to a computer. WYSIWYG word processing applications such as WordPerfect and MS-Word use procedural markup (proprietary coding) to describe how a text is to appear in print or (more or less) on the screen. Problems occur when attempting to move a document between different applications and systems.

Generic coding

SGML uses descriptive markup (generic coding) to describe what text is rather than how it will appear in any given presentation. A chapter heading may simply be tagged <chapter> while a section heading might be tagged <section>, for example. The names of the tags are user-defined and are simply generic identifiers for the named elements, in this case, chapter and section. Elements are defined in a separate file called a Document Type Definition (DTD). The DTD also defines the relationship between the elements and is analogous to a data definition for a database.

Framework

SGML does for text what relational theory and SQL did for regular data over a decade ago—it provides a framework for describing and subsequently marking up text that is independent of the application used to create it. SGML can provide the structure necessary for organizations to carry over their publications into multiple media. SGML documents can be transferred over computer networks, viewed and edited with different software on different computers, typeset with various publishing software or composition systems, and stored in online or CD-ROM databases.

SGML products

There are many SGML software products on the market. Many of these products are designed for the UNIX environment but are increasingly being made available for PC platforms such as DOS and Windows. One Ottawa-based vendor, Exoterica Corporation, is well known for its OmniMark product, a custom application development system that enables high-powered text manipulation and processing activities. High-end publishing systems such as Interleaf and FrameMaker are now available with SGML utilities. WordPerfect—an application very familiar to OPCUG members—has developed an SGML conversion utility. Intellitag 1.0 for DOS was released in 1993 and converts WordPerfect 5.1 documents to SGML format. As well, Microsoft Corporation has announced its SGML product, to be released as a separate add-on for Word 6.0 or later in the first half of this year.

Making documents interchangeable is the rationale behind SGML, but it goes beyond that. SGML-compliant documents, besides being system and application independent, are reusable in any presentation and with various output media, and are flexible so they can be used for applications that extend beyond traditional publishing processes. As Eric van Herwijnen says in his book, Practical SGML, "If there ever will be 'paperless offices', SGML will play an important role in them".

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DOSKEY

by Eric Clyde

DOSKEY is a TSR program provided with MSDOS 5.0 and later. (TSR stands for Terminate and Stay Ready—programs that can be loaded into memory, "terminate" (apparently finish so that you can do something else on your computer), but stay ready for immediate use.) If you frequently use DOS commands, this program is a must! It keeps in memory a history file of DOS commands you have issued. These can be recalled, edited if necessary, and reissued. You can even prepare "macros", which can be simple batch files or even shortcut keys.

To start the program using the defaults, type DOSKEY. It takes about 4K of memory and, on a 386 or more powerful machine, can be loaded into high memory. As a simple example of its use, type a series of DOS commands, for example:

```
chkdsk
cd \utils
pkzip -a a:backup *.*
```

If you hit either the UpArrow or [F8] key, you will see the last command issued on the screen; if you hit the same key again, you will see earlier commands, one at a time. This can be used to save typing. If you want to backup another subdi-

```
cd \batch
```

rectory, type, for example:

then hit UpArrow key until the command "pkzip -a a:backup *.*" reappears, then hit [Enter] again. You can also use [PageUp] to go the first command issued, and PageDown] to go the latest one.

Commands can also be edited or changed. If you see that the command you have typed is incorrect, or you want to change a previously issued command, hit the [Home] key to go back to the beginning of the command, then use the right arrow key to move the cursor one character. [Ctrl] with the Left arrow key moves the cursor one word to the left; [Ctrl] with the Right arrow key moves one word to the right. The default is to type over what you previously had typed but, if you hit the [Insert] key you can insert letters.

The [F7] key gives a numbered list of previously issued commands, for example:

```
1:chkdsk
2:cd \utils
3:pkzip -a a:backup *.*
```

The [F8] key followed by one or more characters searches in memory for the last command starting with these characters. Repeatedly pressing the [F8] key cycles through these command.

The [F9] key followed by, for instance, 1, reissues the corresponding command as reported by [F7], that is, "chkdsk" in the above example.

DOSKEY macros are defined in the following way doskey [macroname]=[the commands]

The following two simple examples are taken from DOS 6 Secrets, by Robert Sainsbury:

```
doskey ?=help $*    (issuing the command "?"
starts the DOS Help command)
```

```
doskey \=cd \  (issuing the command "\"
changes to the root directory.)
```

The following is a partial rewrite of the batch file q.bat, which appeared in the April Bulletin:

```
doskey q=c: $t cd\quicken5 $t q $t pkzip -es
e:accounts acc*.* $t xcopy e:accounts.zip
b:$t cd\
```

(all of the above is in one line)

Note that "$t" separates the commands, and "if" statements are not allowed in macros, so the macro automatically backs up the files. A detailed discussion of the uses of DOSKEY would require more space than is available here. If you have any questions, bring them to the next Beginner's SIG on May 30th. In the meantime, if you have any questions on this or on any other topic, phone me at 749-2387.

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Internet *continued from front page*

tive (and brief, unfortunately) tour of the Internet. Her presentation touched on the Net's early history and tools (FTP and Telnet), continued with current trends and tools (Archie, Gopher, and Veronica), and finished with a peek into the near-future. Tools such as Mosaic, still very much a work-in-progress, support hypertext, graphics, and sound, making "cybermalls" viable as an alternative to our present shopping habits.

At present, the Internet can be used for almost anything that we can conceive of: research, information dissemination, commercial activity, or just plain fun. The future will be, I suspect, even more amazing. In fact, I'm already starting to find the Home Shopping Channel pretty tame.

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NSTN offer

NSTN offers OPCUG members a special setup fee of $25 (normally $35). Also, NSTN offers the first 3 months or 30 hours connect time (whichever comes first) free.

Existing NSTN subscribers who have joined since the NSTN presentation at the April general meeting, and who have paid the full price, should contact NSTN to obtain the OPCUG benefit. Send an e-mail to Bonnie Larose at:

`Larose@nstn.ca`