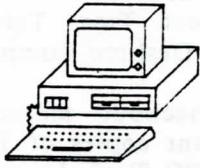


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The Micro Times



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By Bob Van Den Oever

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE

This month's feature article hopefully will give you a better understanding for the kind of support that is available from the Micro Support Group. Most of you are aware that you can check out hardware, software, and manuals from us; some of you know that you can come to our area to use hardware and software; but how many of you knew that we also provide problem solving, analysis, consultation services, and micro software development? Let me begin by describing some of these services that we provide.

One service that most of you are familiar with is the help we offer with software packages. The kinds of problems we can help you with run the gamut from getting commands to work correctly, suggesting which commands to use, configuring your software to work with your hardware, and installing new versions of the software. We have a limited set of software packages that we know and support, but we do try to be as flexible as possible in supporting other packages. The software that we know fairly well includes:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Lotus 1-2-3 | dBase |
| Procomm | WordPerfect |
| PC-Write | Open Access |
| Diagram Master | Chart Master |
| Microsoft Chart | AOM II Plus |
| The Norton Utilities | |

We also provide a consulting service. If you have a need for hardware, software, or training we will do what we can to help you find the solution to your needs. This can include literature searches, talking to vendors, evaluating packages, making recommendations and specifying PC configurations. We also do our best to keep up with current trends in software and hardware. In many cases this allows us to make unsolicited recommendations on hardware, software, and training packages that we think would benefit EDC. Sometimes we follow these

recommendations with purchases of our own, in other cases we wait until someone in the building has a need, then recommend which package or configuration to purchase.

Another service that we provide is writing custom software or customizing commercial software. Most commonly we customize existing commercial software. Generally this type of customization falls into two categories; 1) provide menus, scripts, etc that make it easier to use the software, or 2) automate some portion of the procedures needed to use the software. The Procomm nprint command is an example of this.

Another set of services that the Micro Support Group provides (and which I hope you are well aware of) are publishing the Micro Times and providing hands-on classes and noontime seminars on microcomputer topics.

The other services that we provide are those that provide equipment, software, etc for EDC personnel's use. These can be divided into two groups; 1) Equipment, software, and manuals that can be checked out and taken wherever needed, and 2) equipment located in the Micro Support Group resource room which any user may use. I would first like to review the checkouts.

We currently have four classes of checkout items and hope to add a fifth. Current classes are hardware, software, manuals, and periodicals. We hope to add some training packages in the future.

The most often checked out class of hardware is the portable computer. We have five 'luggable' (weight approximately 35 pounds) Compaq portables. These are all equipped with a 10 meg hard disk, a 5.25" low density floppy disk, and a modem. We also have six NEC

Multispeed laptop computers. These computers, which can run off built-in batteries, have modems and two 3.5" floppy disks.

Other checkout hardware includes four printers, three of which are very compact Diconix models which can be run from batteries. These printers when paired with NEC Multispeed computers have been very popular with personnel who are going on travel and want to take along some computer power. The fourth printer is a NEC brand desktop model which would only be of use within the Data Center.

The Micro Support Group also has a number of software packages that can be checked out. These are a rather varied lot and include word processors (Display Write and Wordstar), data bases (dBase II and dBase III), a spreadsheet (Lotus 1-2-3 version 1.1a), compilers (Microsoft C and Pascal), utilities (Borland's Sidekick and Superkey and two versions of the Norton Utilities), a project manager (Harvard Project Manager), and an integrated package (Open Access). While these pieces of software are seldom the most current versions, they are still serviceable programs.

It should be noted that in addition to this checkout software, we have several shareware programs that can be installed on the checkout computers. These include Procomm, PC-Write, PC-Calc, PC-File, and As-Easy-As.

The third class of checkouts are manuals. The manuals can be divided into two types; 1) manuals provided with the software or hardware and 2) manuals written by independent authors. In the first class we have manuals for Microsoft Chart, Open Access II, AOM II, DOS, and the Compaq+ Operations Guide.

In the area of independently authored manuals we have concentrated on 1-2-3, WordPerfect, MS DOS, and shareware. We have two MS DOS manuals, one being for advanced users. The shareware manual covers PC-Write, PC-File, and PC-Talk. (As of this writing the shareware manual, which was ordered some time ago, has yet to arrive at EDC.) For 1-2-3 we have five independently authored manuals on hand. They are: 1) Using 1-2-3, Special Edition (a basic user's manual), 2) 1-2-3 Desktop Companion (a reference manual), 3) 1-2-3 Macro Library, 4) The 1-2-3 Command Language, and 5) 1-2-3 Tips, Tricks, and Traps. There are four

independently authored WordPerfect manuals available for checkout. They are: 1) Using WordPerfect, 2) WordPerfect, Advanced Techniques, 3) WordPerfect Tips, Tricks, and Traps, and 4) WordPerfect Desktop Companion.

The fourth class of checkout materials are periodicals. We have recent copies of PC Week, Infoworld, PC Magazine, PC Tech Journal, Byte, Federal Computer News, Dr. Dobb's Journal, CD-Rom Review, AI Expert, and PC Publishing. We also have Unix Review and Unixworld. The periodicals are not checkouts in the truest sense of the word since we don't keep them locked up or under tight control. However, we do ask that you sign them out if you wish to take them with you.

The fifth class of checkout doesn't exist yet. However, we hope to purchase several training packages that personnel could sign out and use to learn or upgrade their knowledge of WordPerfect and Lotus 1-2-3.

The last type of support that I wish to discuss is the equipment and software that we have in our resource room (room 519). This is equipment and software that anyone at EDC can come in and use when it is available.

We have one Compaq Deskpro that is set aside strictly for personnel to walk in and use. (We also have several other machines that are occasionally available for use.) We have available both high and low density 5.25" and high and low density 3.5" floppy drives. These can be invaluable for transferring files from one media to another. Also available for your use is a Hewlett Packard 7475A plotter along with Microsoft Chart, Diagram Master, and Chart Master software. This software and hardware combination can be a great aid in doing graphics work.

The Compaq Deskpro also is connected to the Sun Network File System through ethernet. As the only ethernet connected PC at EDC you may find that the use of this machine provides the easiest and fastest method of uploading and downloading files between PC's and the larger machines at EDC. The Network File System can also be used from the PC to do other traditional network tasks such as using peripherals from other machines while working on the PC.

Other peripherals available in the resource room are: the Magnabyte overhead display which can be used to display the contents of the PC's monitor using an overhead projector; a small graphics hand scanner which is being used as a test vehicle for scanning technology; several mice; and a PCCopy board which gives us the ability to copy copy-protected 5.25" low density diskettes and the ability to sometimes repair data damage to 5.25" low density diskettes.

In addition to the graphics and network software mentioned earlier, the resource room computer

can be loaded with any of the software that can be loaded onto the checkout machines. We also have Open Access available for use on that machine. In addition to the ethernet connection the Deskpro also has a hyperbus connection and a Hayes modem.

I hope this review of the Micro Support Group services gives you some idea of why we are here. More importantly I hope it gave you some ideas on ways that we can help you with your work.

\CAL>

A CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

July 1988						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

YOUR PC
AND
YOUR HEALTH

YOUR PC AND YOUR HEALTH: 7/28, 12:00 -12:45, SAB classroom.

The Micro Support Group and the Health Activities Specialist will present a noontime seminar that gives some health tips and demonstrates a number of shareware programs that can be used to aid you in maintaining your health. The primary emphasis will be on diet, including tips and programs for those who must follow special or restricted diets.

As you may have noticed, our calendar is rather limited this month. There are several reasons for this. Our classroom and equipment are in use for a two week period in July for a training class. We also need some time to plan and prepare for our Lotus hands-on training which we hope to teach in August. We hope this slow down in nooners doesn't disappoint you too much and promise to get back to a more robust schedule in August or September.

\ASK>**"ASK CURSOR" - ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS**

Question: Now that I'm starting to use PROCOMM I sometimes get strange graphics on my screen. This doesn't happen when I use a terminal. Is there something wrong with the PC or PROCOMM?

Cursor: To answer your question: no, the PC and PROCOMM are working just the way a terminal emulation package on a PC is supposed to work. This is a good question and is something that can happen quite easily; however, explaining what is happening will get a little technically involved. For those that just want a quick answer--do one of the following: 1) change your number of data bits to seven and set the parity appropriately, 2) subtract 128 from all characters greater than 128 in your translation table, or 3) call the Micro Support Group.

"And now, the rest of the story..." The problem most of the time is that the PC is operating in eight data bits, no parity mode and what you are communicating with is operating at seven data bits and one parity bit. Since the PC is using all eight bits for data and since the PC has defined a character symbol for all 256 ASCII characters it has a symbol to display for each character received. The sending machine is sending you alphanumeric characters; however, the PC is using the parity bit also as data and thus half the received data is being displayed as something other than an alphanumeric character

(strange graphics). Most terminals can only display alphanumeric characters and thus ignore the eighth bit when displaying characters. That's why nothing looks strange on your terminal.

There are two things you can do in PROCOMM to fix your display problems. One is to change your communications parameters (ALT P) to match the sending machine. This is the preferred option. The other is to change your translation table (ALT W) to map ASCII characters 129 through 255 to 0 through 128. This makes all eight-bit data look like seven-bit data.

For those using Crosstalk, even though you may be using eight data bits, when you are in terminal emulation mode the high order or eighth bit is ignored. This handy feature is done automatically for you.

If you have any further questions or specific cases causing you problems, as mentioned above, option 3 (call the Micro Support Group) is always available.

If you have any questions or strange events you would like explained, stop by the Micro Support Resource Room (Rm 519).

\ETC>**RANDOM NOTES OF INTEREST****AOM MAIL ALIASES**

If you are sending mail to a group of aliases on AOM, be sure that the total alias string (the list of all the user names found under those aliases) is no longer than 250 characters. If the string is too long, you will either get an error message or the mail will only be sent to the people listed in the first 250 characters (no error message will be shown). To see a list of mail aliases, type "Esc H" after entering the "Send Mail" menu. If you need assistance in sending mail, contact the Micro Support Group.

Here are the answers to last month's wordfind puzzles. We hope you had fun doing them. If you enjoy doing these types of puzzles let us know. We enjoy creating them and hope they bring you a little bit of a challenge and a chance to reinforce some of the knowledge you have gained from our seminars.

ELBATROP KLRPOTPALMKN
 QJOU(EPAT)S QDAPHCUOTYGM
 RRYVCBMCR TRACKBALLKMK
 BWTWSIDMFMGPBXANVXEX
 HLA DRHNLROK P QDFBXTWB
 C H I V C U P T X I N V B C K U C E N P X U
 P L R A E R N I Q V E R K K A G O N J P
 K T R L E T T V R L B T P O T K S E D K
 Y G E N E O F G A S B E R N O U L L I W
 H O R R N O I C F F J D I S K E T T E
 B O T U P U L R O V O R A K M O U S E J T
 O T N T X E P L O T T E R M T K H A Y
 A M Q J S E R H F L O P P V B R I N T R
 R O S C I N O R T N E C K I J O H U H N
 D S K S I D D R A H V A Y W X F S N J
 R R V D K A M O T O R O L A U E U C B O
 S H S O T N I C A M O P A R A L L E D V
 O Y Q O O T M A T R I X R C N X F P B H
 R O S S E C O R P O R C I M N C S E Q S
 H R Q L E D U U S C A N N E R J H E G S

PC HARDWARE

V X H E A D E R E X L A R Y G L X P Q V O D S
 T N E D N I F B X T W B V N I I L U R S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 P K E U S E D O C P X S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 V A E E C K K T H E S A U R U S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 A G S N M A C R O G O N S E B P I R R S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 P B E E N G S S E W H A N I S T I M M U N E S S W O O D M M E N S I T S
 P A R L L O C F U F E R J U F U N N E S S W O O D M M E N S I T S
 N N K R S R H R B I R N T B N I I L U R S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 U M H A G R E K O A J H R S L E I L U R S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 B E P T H R A Y S D O C A W R F S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 O U U H E J R L O K E R V D I F K E S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 O H A N E R R N O I T A N E H P Y H C S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 Q U B S C N E S T R I K E O U T H R S O S S U M O I I L T U O C C
 U J H T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S S U M O I I L T U O C C

WORDPERFECT

K S E P A C S E W A X S F T E N U P O P J
 L U T Q R D H D E M E I T E R B W D O U G
 S L M U V M T P A A I U W K P C I I M D Y
 S S E N F L A G W Q O D N L T P P I I M D Y
 D I H H T P W Y I A V I O B T I N T M
 O N N R S O U P V C N D L I Q Y N S O P
 G A P R U F E O E R R J O C C S U O R E M
 M M T D G R L L D H T R Y N V E C T B C C
 M O B K T O D D N T R A C K U M B L W T K K
 W V C H S A A I M E D H E G B X I A S I I
 N V F C X T E P S O B R N E X L A R E F I I
 L X F P S O L E R K D F E A B X T W B O
 V U E X V N B E K C C U S T P R E N X
 U R Q Q V E L E D O O R E T S K A G O
 N J P B A C K U B T V P P R L O S O R T
 B K E F G S W H N Q C F V Y F E R E J J
 U P U P A U S E E C H O L J T T E N M
 K H A Y M O R E D I R E C T I O N E J E
 R H B C O N F I G U R A T I O N I N T R

DOS COMMANDS

M K N V Q J O M U L O L Y G R R Y V C B
 M R K I M B A W T L L W S E N I F E D B
 S I M E G T B X A E T I L P S N V X R E
 C N X W R L A L C C W O R K S H E E T
 I P R I L X O T P Q D F B X T W C B V A L L
 H U X X C N V W O D N I W B I K U R
 P U P X K E C U T A N D P A S T E T U C C
 A R O V R E C F M E K K A I G O D N F O L
 R H O R I Z O N T A L R O W S I J P F O L
 G T U V R B K E E F C G S W T W E R A T I O N
 H C N O L C L S U M E R F C S R R G E T I O N
 J U P A U E L E L T I T O J N E E D A A S N
 T T B N D M K H A Y M Q N S O S D A A S N
 J E T E G N I W A R D E R A I N A R S N
 L R A H B I N T R O K J H U T I E H F S
 S V M R O U N D I N G A Y W C U H F S
 N J R R P U K O O L R V D K N A R U C
 B O O S T A T U S S O V O Y U Q R A C N S
 X F P B H R O S R U C N C F S E O L S Q
 C N H V E R T I C A L C O L U M N S R Q

AOM SPREADSHEET

In 1985, VESCO acquired a Compaq Deskpro computer to computerize office functions. Maintenance office functions include work orders, purchase requisitions, preventative maintenance schedules, monthly reports, budget reports, and energy conservation reports. The Open Access software package was chosen because it's easy to use, and is an integrated system which includes a database, word processor, and spreadsheet.

Some of the more interesting and time-saving features of the database are the combining of files, transferring information to another module such as the word processor or spreadsheet, and filing.

An example of the combining of files is the purchase requisition. Information for a purchase order is typed into three different files to save file space and eliminate repetitive typing. These three files are then combined onto one pre-defined print mask and printed out on a DI-1 requisition form. A "macro" is used to automate the repetitive task of typing the query to combine the files, thus, making it quite easy and less time-consuming to type a requisition.

Numerous reports are easily created by transferring information from the database to the word processor or spreadsheet. An example is the monthly report. The information from work orders and preventative maintenance files is transferred from the database to the word processor. By using this system, the format of the report has been changed to make it a more clear, concise report.

The database has been most beneficial in taking the drudgery out of record keeping. Hundreds of work orders are received and purchase orders typed each year, all of which are automatically filed by the database upon entry. Therefore, when someone calls to check the status of a work order or purchase order, all I need to do is a "search" for an answer instead of scanning through numerous pages of a green log book as was done in the past.

On the original Open Access software package the word processor module was clumsy at best. Since then, it has been updated twice and become more of an asset than a nuisance. Formatting capabilities have become much more flexible and easier to use.

The spreadsheet is an excellent module to calculate budget reports and energy conservation reports. Since 1975, the Data Center has been very active in energy conservation. Fourteen projects have saved over a million dollars in energy costs over the past 12 years. The cost of each project and the energy dollars saved are entered onto a spreadsheet and updated each year. This precision tracking of these savings has instilled confidence to pursue new energy conservation projects.

The computerization of the maintenance office functions has resulted in a more efficient, productive office.

This issue was published using WordPerfect (version 4.2) and printed on a Hewlett Packard model 2686A Laserjet printer. All of the articles were originally written using Open Access and then imported into WordPerfect. The wordfind puzzle answers were generated using Wordfind from Brainerd Enterprises. The masthead was generated using Diagram Master and plotted on the HP-7475A plotter. The columnization, column headings, line drawings, and various fonts were all generated in WordPerfect, giving you a taste of its capabilities.

CURSOR 