From the desk of ...

Adam

The newsletter is continuing to approach the level of quality that Joe and I have set as our goal. This issue has been printed on an offset press, which ought to improve the look considerably. (The previous issue was run off on a Xerox 5100 high-speed duplicator – a photocopier on steroids.) Made n' a Minute printers are being very generous and helpful in pulling together with us to create something that we can be proud of.

This newsletter serves many functions that aren't immediately apparent. It's read not only by VNUS members, but also by people outside the group who are interest-ed in the NeXT. It's an advertisement for the user group and the NeXT computer itself. We try to be aware of that fact, and appeal to as broad a range of readers as possible. The people who read this news-letter vary widely – from UNIX hackers to people who have no interest in what's go-ing on underneath the interface. Putting together a newsletter that interests every-one is a daunting task.

I put a call for article submissions to the readers of the "comp.sys.next.*". That's how we came to run Jiro's article on DIT's FloppyWorks program. Jiro spends a lot of time writing product reviews and posting them to the net and we're very pleased that he has allowed us to publish some of his excellent and thorough work.

I hope that more people take an interest in contributing to the newsletter. A lot of the people I have spoken to are under the impression that they have nothing of value to contribute, haven't the necessary writ-ing skills or can't spare the time. In reality, a one page article is no longer than a good-sized posting to the net, we are more than willing to assist in polishing an article's writing style and once the proverbial juices start flowing, it takes no time at all to slap together a mini-masterpiece of journalism.

We who own NeXT's and/or follow the progress of the NeXT are mostly pioneers and instigators. I hope that some of you will take the time to tell us what you are doing here in the NeXT community. Writ-ing for the VNUS newsletter doesn't have to mean a software review or an instruc-tional piece. It could simply be a short discourse on any matter of interest to the NeXT community. We invite you to cheer, complain, or just talk to your heart's content. This is not your average, boring newsletter – it has character, guts and more than a little irreverence behind it.

Also in this issue, we feature Donovan Whistler's summary of NeXT-related news from the Seybold conference. As a publication struggling to be a NeXT-only effort, we in the production staff are well aware of the need for high-quality tools in the areas of page layout, illustration and image manipulation. The NeXT is arguably suit-ed to computer publishing more than any other task, and yet that remains one of the most under-exploited areas. Announce-ments at this Seybold conference give rise to cautious optimism here at VNUS news. Kudos to Donovan for his excellent work.

We continue with some of our regular segments – Larry's soapbox, Rory's share-ware review and the "/usr/local" synopsis of VNUS happenings. Future issues will hopefully include an expanded "/usr/local", as the group becomes more active. If you would like to write to us, simply address your correspondence to any of the places listed in the *Submissions Guidelines* section of the masthead. We are keenly interested in hearing your views about the newsletter, both style and content. We are delighted to receive suggestions, praise or criticisms of our efforts – just as long as it's not ticking when it lands on our doorstep. ◆

Joe

The Seybold conference has come and gone. There were much more NeXT relat-ed products on display this year then last year. But the long speculated under-$5000 NeXT colour page printer did not materi-alize. So, it is back to the crystal ball to try to see what Mr. Jobs has planned for us in the coming year. Here's my prediction of NeXT announcements for the coming year:

- Slightly faster 33Mhz and 50Mhz 68040 NeXT computers will probably be an-nounced sometime in January, 1992. System version 3.0, which will use CD ROMs as a distribution media, will accompany this announcement.
- 100+ MIPS RISC-based multi-processing NeXT computers will not be announced until at least September, 1992 (please prove me wrong, NeXT!).
- NeXTstep will be ported to other proces-sor platforms. Highly likely: Intel 80486-based PCs, HP Snake, and other 680x0 processor based systems.
- Possible NeXT allies: HP, Intel.
- 1992 will be an exciting year for graphic design and publishing on the NeXT com-puter as exciting products are released from innovative developers such as Altsys, Lighthouse, RightBrain, etc. ◆

Disclaimer: I make no guarantee to the accuracies of these predictions. Only the NeXT god truly knows where the hammer will fall.

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The *VNUS Newsletter* is a bi-monthly newsletter published by the *Vancouver NeXT Users Society.*

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Submission

The Vancouver NeXT Users Society extends an invitation to any and all interested people who would like to contribute to future issues. The VNUS Newsletter is a forum for NeXT users of all types, from UNIX gurus to new-comers and novices. While we make every effort to print work in it's entirety, we must reserve the right to edit submitted material for content and/or space considerations.

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From the chair . . .

Lawrence Clarke

Welcome to another issue of the Vancouver NeXT Users Society (VNUS) newsletter. This time lets review the basics of the NeXT computer.

Some people that have attended our past meetings have commented that they don't understand what's going on. It's usually their first exposure to NeXT computers and they are not familiar with the Graphical User Interface (GUI) and the operating system. Also, some people have picked up our newsletter at local computer and book stores. They read it and see articles on Adobe Illus-trator, X-Windows, e-mail, etc., and have no idea of what we are talking about. There will always be new people coming into our group so I think we should devote a small section of our meetings to address the concerns of new users of NeXT computers. Having used them for sometime, it's somewhat diffi-cult to get into the frame of mind of a new user, but I'll give it a try. So, back to basics ...

NeXT computers first appeared in 1989. The company was started by Steve Jobs, formerly of Apple Com-puters, Inc. The idea behind NeXT was not just to build a better computer, but also to have the best software with a vision for the future. NeXT computers use Mach Unix as their operating system. It's not like MS-DOS on a PC or System 7 on a Macintosh. It's an opera-ting environment that allows several programs to run at the same time and also allows each of those programs to communicate with each other. Why do you need to run several programs at once when you can only interact with one of them at a time? To get your work done faster! Users are often waiting for a spreadsheet to calculate, a file to be transferred or for something to be print-ed out. Each time you have to wait for something to be done, you are losing time and money. With Unix operating systems, you do not have to wait. You can carry on with something else while your other task gets carried out in the background. But Unix systems have been known to be very unfriendly. The commands are hard to learn and their syntax can drive you up-the-wall. NeXT has put an easy to use GUI, called NeXTstep, on top of Unix. Now you can use the Unix operating system through a series of easy to use menus and selections. Just about anyone can be using a NeXT system within 20 minutes.

NeXT computers were not designed to be a personal home computer, but rather a bunch of networked computers linked together in an office environment. Although many VNUS members are using NeXT computers at home, they can be linked to the rest of the world through UUCP and the Internet (more on that later). From a NeXT brochure, "Why does the world need a new com-puter? In the 1980s, personal computers accomplished their mission: to radically improve individual productivity. But that's just not enough anymore. In the 1990s, competitive advantage will come from improving the productivity of en-tire groups, so they can stay ahead of a world that's changing faster than ever. The personal computer revolutionized the way we worked in the 80s. NeXT may well change the way we work in the 90s."

Although most members in the group are not physically connected to other members machines, we can still be in touch through a modem and electron-ic mail.

For instance, members use electron-ic mail (e-mail) to submit articles for this newsletter to Joe who designs the page layout. Adam designs graphics for the newsletter and e-mails them to Joe. Joe provides me with a pre-release version of the newsletter which I review for content. I send the changes to another VNUS member who is an English major and she sends the changes to Joe. Joe then takes the finished FrameMaker document to WYSIWYG Graphics for high resolution output on the Linotronic imagesetter. None of us has to meet physically. It can all be done through electronic mail. This is Interpersonal Computing.

Electronic mail on the NeXT is not like any other computer system in the world. Instead of just having plain char-acters, you can have those characters displayed in any font (typeface) you like. You can incorporate graphics, voice, music, programs or anything else that you have on your NeXT system. It's a new way of working that can dramat-ically enhance the capabilities of an entire department, an entire company or an entire university, by enabling people to tap each other's strengths to meet new challenges.

The best reason to buy a NeXT is if you plan to develop software. NeXTstep is completely object oriented by design. With a program called Interface Builder, which comes with every NeXT system, you can create a program by selecting various pictures (objects), drawing some lines between these pictures and then tell the computer to run the program you have just

created. A program can be cre-ated without writing a single piece of code. Custom software is created in a fraction of the time. Software that used to take months or years to create, now takes hours or days. Applications you develop with NeXTstep are modular, too, so you can reuse portions whenever you see fit. And they're extremely easy to maintain. Now, when you update, there's no need to rewrite your whole application – you simply update the parts you want to change.

The best way for you to experience NeXTstep is to try it for yourself. If you have used computers before, you will be amazed at this new technology. If you have never used computers before, you can be using this machine and be pro-ductive in a very short time. You are invited to attend one of our VNUS meet-ings which are now held at Science World on the last Wednesday of every month (except December) at 7 pm. If you would like to join VNUS, there is a $50.00 per year membership fee. That fee also helps the user group to expand, grow and provide you with technical support for your NeXT computer.

If you prefer a personal demonstration of NeXT computers, please contact a member of the VNUS executive committee listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

Finally, a reminder that Advantage Computers is the NeXT dealer for the general public. They are located in Burnaby, B.C. and their phone number is 299-3881. Advantage will be hosting NeXPO' 91 at the Pan Pacific Hotel on November 7 in Vancouver, B.C. This is an all day long exposition of NeXT computers and the software for them. Hope to see you there. ◆

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NeXT at Work

NeXT M.D.

Dean D. Blakeley, MD

This is the first article in our "NeXT at Work" series; "Maxim Gun" is the other one you will come across in this issue. The purpose of "NeXT at Work" is to show how users are putting their NeXTs to work in real world applications. If you are using your NeXT computer(s) in applications which may be of interest to our readers, please jolt down your expe-riences and impressions, and send it in!

First a word of introduction. At the moment, I'm a junior faculty member of the general internal medicine division at The Ohio State University. My responsibili-ties lie in two areas. For twenty hours a week, I staff a public health clinic for the city of Columbus, Ohio, and the rest of the time I'm up at OSU Hospital seeing patients for preoperative clearance.

The second job in layman's parlance needs some description. The vast majo-rity of patients seen by the surgical sub-specialists are sent in on referral from outside the university system, which in-cludes a majority of Ohio, parts of West Virginia and Kentucky. This means that in most cases, their primary physicians are also that far away, too. I fit in as a sort of a surrogate internist for these pa-tients who may have significant medical problems that the surgeons don't know how to handle.

My first interaction is to meet with these patients in the outpatient clinic about a week before surgery. They have already had a battery of preoperative blood tests, electrocardiograms, x-rays, etc., by the time I see them. It becomes my job to do a complete patient inter-view to determine their preoperative risk of developing a major cardiac complica-tion, and to decide if they are in the best possible condition for the planned sur-gery. Sometimes, all I have to do is change some medications, or order an-other test or two. Sometimes, I have to delay the case for a week or two to get them ready. And sometimes, I cancel a case outright because the risk of surgery outweighs the benefit. In all situations, a timely report needs to be delivered to all interested parties which include the at-tending surgeons, their residents, the anesthesiologists and their referring physicians.

The NeXT fits in here. When I first started the job back in July '91, my only real job preparation was a preoperative course held in Philadelphia. There I met another internist by the name of Marvin Gozum, MD, who had written a DOS based application that would write a standard preoperative consult in a ge-neric ASCII format that could be ported to any word processing program. I have been using WordPerfect since medical school, so naturally I would port these over to WP 5.1 and manually force the report into WP format. This was not saving me the time I thought it would, and I would be leaving my office as late as 10 – 11 p.m. on a routine basis as well as long weekends. I decided there and then that I needed a home computer sys-tem.

My wife was a big help at this point. She works as a lead programmer/analyst for the university computer system as well as working towards a Master's in computer graphics at OSU, and was very conversant in C and UNIX. She had been thinking about getting a UNIX workstation to do her graphics labs at home as opposed to all-nighters in the university's Sun and HP labs. I had been looking at some DOS boxes, both desk-top and portable. But she had always had an attraction to NeXT. She works in the same building as Tyler Gingrich, the president of the local NeXT user group and arranged a demonstration in his home one night. Needless to say, I was blown away and decided to ditch the DOS solution. Denise (my wife) kept tabs on "comp.sys.next" and found a used Cube that was for sale. We made contact and gave him the best bid. So, on August 3rd, I road-tripped to the Washington DC area and took posses-sion of our Cube.

It's a Businessland firesale 68030 with the old monitor, keyboard, OD, and a 660 Mb Maxtor that has already been upgraded to the 68040 and

NeXTStep 2.1. Peripherals include a Dove Fax fax/data modem and a PLI SuperFloppy 2.8)

Set up was a cinch. I went into the original report writer and cannibalized all of the medical diagnostic paragraphs. These were then convertd to a set of WordPerfect paragraphs which were formatted with all of the necessary fonts and formats. They were all saved in a nested hierarchy in the File Viewer un-der each major diagnostic grouping (e.g. Cardiology would have the high blood pressure, previous heart attack, chest pain, and other related files). I then cre-ated a standardized report template that would be compatible with WordPerfect 5.0, and finally added in a Tools direc-tory that contains three signatures that I scanned in using a fax to the NeXT. Other tools include a nomogram – created with TopDraw – that allows me to calculate a patient's preoperative car-diac risk by drawing a line across it with TopDraw's line-drawing tool. The graph was originally published in 1986 by an internist at Toronto General Hospital.

Now to finally set the stage. I will see that patient and gather all of the relevant historical information. Before I go home that evening, I pull the electro-cardiogram off the cardiology computer. I log in to the hospital's computer system remotely with Stuart and kermit, and access the lab and x-ray reports. These are copied and pasted into a new WP document and put on hold. I jump to my new patient report form and begin add-ing the demographic information to the opening paragraph. Then I use the Doc-ument Insert function and call up the paragraphs on the problems specific to the patient which already has a standard set of recommendations and medication dosages written in. These paragraphs are then customized to the individual patient's information. A standard text is then inserted about the risk of develop-ing a deep venous thrombosis (a serious blood clot) and what steps should be taken to prevent it from occurring. The spelling is proofed, a signature is added, and the lab information is appended to the bottom. The article is stored for fu-ture reference via Digital Librarian, two hard copies are printed on the NeXT laser printer, and copies are distributed back to the hospital via the fax modem to the various offices around the 1100-bed hospital complex.

The response to this system has been very enthusiastic. The surgeons like the timely turnaround and legibility. Most handwritten consults are very il-legible – the folklore that doctors have the worst handwriting is true. The anes-thesiologists like it because they get to hear from the consultant directly as op-posed to reading the report on the chart the morning of surgery. The residents are envious because I can work at home. My division head likes it so much that he is buying a NeXTStation for the of-fice. And my wife likes it because I can work at home. ◆

NeXT at Work

The Maxim Gun

Jack Reynolds

I am a white collar professional. I entered the "Professional Workstation Market" when I bought a Next compu-ter about a year ago. My reasons for not purchasing another Mac or PC were simple: my competitors and co-workers were using Macs and PCs, and I couldn't do anything more with mine then they could with theirs.

I work in a competitive industry and I'm surrounded by competitive co-workers. To give you an idea, most of my colle-agues have read *Marketing Warfare* and *The Art of War* to name a few. Since I am not as smart as some and not as hard working as most, I need a better set of weapons that gives me the opportunity to either defeat my adversary with supe-rior tools or to fall on my sword trying.

When I evaluated the work habits of my peers to find clues as to how I may defeat similar workers at other compa-nies, two things became immediately apparent:

- People were spending less that 1.5 hrs per day "using" their computers – even though they always seemed to be turned on.
- Most of the time at the battlefield was spent revising and modifying paper work – usually with the assistance of one our more administrators.

From these observations, I drew the rather simple conclusion that in order to be more competitive, I had to use my computer more than 1.5 hours per day and use it to do my paperwork as well as the standard applications like spread-sheets. *I needed a paperless battlefield*.

I explored DOS and Mac based weapon systems first. Mac didn't have much in the way of a paperless office that I could find. DOS had a number of very elaborate systems available. How-ever, all of them were way too expensive for my defense budget (under ten grand) and all of them required a pre-defined structure for the handling of the paper flow. My problem was that everything I do in terms of paper work is very fluid and unstructured. I cannot define ahead of time what my combat needs are going to be in terms of indexing, document size, etc.

Initially, I was drawn to the NeXT because of price. The things that made the DOS based "document management systems" too expensive were the high resolution screens, optical storage, and special imaging boards for fast compression and file viewing. Furthermore, the NeXT had integrated these components and others in a way that served my pur-poses. All this for about one quarter the cost of a DOS based system comprised of parts from many different manufac-turers. I was half way there.

Now, to find the software. Fortunately, I didn't have to look too hard because there weren't very many pro-grams to look at on the NeXT. In fact, there were only two that did document management. One was $25,000 and the other was $595. I decided to look at the cheap one first .

PaperLight, solved my problem of unstructured paper flow in a unique way. It uses a hypertext indexing system to attach keywords to faxes and scanned documents. These keywords could ei-ther be entered manually or be entered by way of optical character recognition. Any of these words or combination of words can strategically reference any other document on the system. Addi-tionally, icons from the browser can be attached and filed with the documents in a similar way to how icons are used in NeXTMail.

I arrived at the office with my new NeXT weapon early on Saturday morn-ing to begin scanning in documents from my desk and filing cabinets. Dealer applications, credit reports, customer files, market analysis, product literature, correspondence, wire transfers, contracts, competitor information. By Sunday night, I had loaded most of the impor-tant ammunitions – over 1,500 pages worth. I was pleased to see that because the DSP had performed on the fly Group IV compression of the documents, they took up less than 100 MB on optical.

On Monday morning I returned to the battlefield. I was a little tired. But, ready for my first skirmish. I got defeat-ed – it was horrible. It was more than twice the work to do battle. I had to operate in the old-manual-mode in par-allel with my new paperless system. It was more work than I could manage. I fell farther and farther behind. I didn't have the coordination to capitalize on the NeXT multi-tasking environment, I didn't have the time to scan in all the new paper, and I didn't have the courage to abandon the manual filing system. I was loosing the war.

Just when all was deemed to be lost, I was rescued by two brand new deadly weapons. One was code named “040”, the other was “Integrated Faxmodem Receipt” or IFR for short. The 040 al-lowed me greater ammunition loading speed from the scanner, faster searching through documents, and more timely document reconnaissance. The IFR, when combined with a dedicated com-munication line, provided unattended automatic loading. This along with my increased mission experience started to turn the tide. The combined power of my weapons system became invincible. I have abandoned the manual filing sys-tem.

Since then, my life has been changed forever. Each day I become more deadly at using my weapons. Six active applications? No problem. Faxing, scanning, document retrieval, all performed simultaneously while talking on the phone? Piece of cake. I have become a very dangerous man. And the best part of all is that my weapons are stealth. Totally transparent to my competitors who still don’t know what hit ’em.

The following is an excerpt of a typical battle:

My intercom announces, “It’s Steve, he wants to know where his order is at.”

"Put him through,” I snap as I pon-der which “Steve” is calling me.

I type in the word “Steve”. Twelve entries flash on the screen. I quickly deduce that since he is looking for an order. He must be a customer.

The phone rings as the call is transferred. I click on the word “order”. Only three entries now.

The second ring heightens the intensity.

Quickly, glancing at the screen I no-tice that only one of the three files has had an entry lately. It must be Steve Sharbock. I double-click on the record and reach for the phone just in time to choke off the third ring.

“Hi Steve,” I say in a calm voice. “What can I do for you?”

Before Steve utters his greeting I'm already perusing his most recent faxes and letters. “Hi Jack, we got shorted one unit on our order. We should have gotten three not two.”

A smirk appears on my lips as I view the order that he sent on the fax. I return fire, “I've got the fax right here Steve. Yep, you should have gotten three.” I type in, “Did you ship three?” on the order and fax the modified document off to the warehouse just as Steve starts small talking.

“Got anything new going on product wise?” he taunts.

I click off some literature to Steve's fax machine as I reply, “Sure, I'll send you some stuff,” knowing full well that he'll get it before we even hang up the phone.

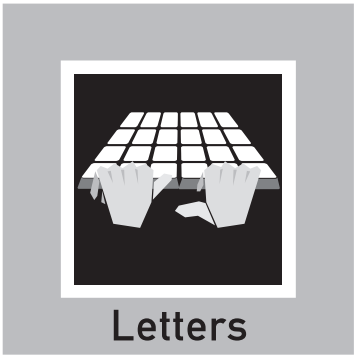
Just as Steve and I end our conversation, the intercom announces, “It was the warehouse. They're going to send the other unit out right away.”

As I close Steve's documents, I rest easy knowing that this skirmish has been permanently recorded, expediently handled , and a minimum of my time has been expended.

Hilaire Belloc (1870 – 1953):
Whatever happens, we have got
The Maxim Gun, and they have not.
vi

◆

Letters



With just one issue of the new and improved newsletter in the can, we already have been receiving mail about it. What follows is a sampling of the responses to our September issue. A few have been edited and some were passed on by Bradley Head, who received them per-sonally in response to his article. We even have one from someone who took exception to being called a "propeller-head" – I guess that was bound to happen.

If you'd like to see your name up in ink, want to smother us with praise or want to have a go at Adam, send your mail to one of the addresses listed at the end of this section.

Your article on Installing Usenet News is great. Even though I still haven't got the uucp administration manual, your guide was essential for a rookie sysop (me) to get it going.

The only addition I could think is necessary, is to add the -s option to the linker, to strip the binaries.

Other options should have been expanded upon, to make them clearer. But in general your work is indispensable as a NeXT specific guide to making it all happen.

Alberto Ricart

I have made great progress in installing C-news on my NeXT since obtaining your installation guide off of the file ser-ver at Purdue. Thanks for filling a real need. I had hacked at it for 2 months without success (not full-time, of course).

J Gregory

I just finished reading the September is-sue of the VNUS newsletter and I must say that I'm disappointed. There is too much fluff and cutesy pictures and not enough of interest to programmers. Can you publish more IB items and code ex-amples in the future? I think it should be a regular feature. The Usenet news arti-cle was a good idea, but I need more sophisticated stuff. And you should get rid of that Adam Smith guy. Not all pro-grammers wear "pocket-protectors". I program for a living and I also have a pilot's license and I'm an avid chess player.

Chip McDonald

Adam responds:
As I remarked in my From the desk of segment, we have to try to appeal to an almost impossibly wide range of inter-ests here at VNUS news. Our hope is that, while we may not touch every base in every issue, we can maintain an over-all balance. Look for the return of Brad Head in a future issue with an article about Interface Builder quirks, shortcuts and traps. In the meantime, if you have a special area of interest that you feel is neglected in the newsletter we invite you to put your mouse where your mouth is and start writing.

Congratulations on the new look of the VNUS newsletter. The look is cleaner and more professional than most news-letters that I receive. I appreciate having something that is informative and at the same time easy to read. Bradley Head's article was a particularly great help to me. I have been feeling out of touch without access to the Internet and that article has given me the boost I needed to get going. My hook-up is still a little shaky, but that's in the nature of UUCP.

Grant Barkarov

Thanks for the new issue of your newsletter. Wow! What a cool-looking mag. I'm used to seeing badly-written, photo-copied things that require effort to get through. Your newsletters is a pleasure to read. I really like the idea of share-ware review, it saves me a lot of time sorting through the FTP sites and trying to figure out what's good and what's not worth my time. Keep up the good work.

Trent Martin Fleen

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FEATURE

The Seybold Computer Publishing Conference and Exposition is one of the premier world events for electronic prepress. Seybold is well known for the quality of its publications and other activities as outlined in the accompanying sidebar. For me this was my second opportunity to attend such an event.

NeXT at Seybold

by Donovan Whistler

Reader will be happy to know that Steve Jobs and the NeXT are well known to the Seybold circle. In fact it was Jonathan Seybold who declared that the NeXT was the best publishing platform. So in pacing the floors of Seybold this year I have lots of tidbits to report on, much of which caused me to get rather ex-cited. First I shall report on NeXT related events as presented at the Conference, followed by those from the Exposition floor, Gutenburg's Garage and of course, details from the Canon / NeXT news conference.

The Conference

Running from October 1st to 3rd, the Seybold Computer Publishing Conference was attended by about 1700 people from the world over, representa-tive of a wide range of computer publishing concerns. Reflecting the international flavor of the event were the simultaneous translations available for the main sessions in French, German and Japanese. This was the sixth such annual event with the theme of the three days of sessions being the “the evolving process of communication”. With the opening sessions mod-erated by Jonathan Seybold, much of the tone in terms of subject matter for the Conference was set.

Unlike last year's conference Steve Jobs did not appear as a keynote speaker. Lucky for me that I had the nerve to seek his autograph last time! This aside, we heard presentations from Wolfgang Kummer, Chairman of Linotype-Hell, Terry Westmacott of Inform, Paul Brainerd of Aldus, John Sculley of Apple Computer, John Warnock of Adobe Systems and Vern Raburn of Slate.

Seybold Background

For over 20 years various Seybold enterprises – ranging from publications, seminars and consulting services – have acted as an extremely important catalyst for pushing and reporting on develop-ments in the prepress market.

Back in 1970 the father and son team of John and Jonathan Seybold initiated The Seybold Report on Publishing *Systems* which is currently published every two weeks. With the entry of Postscript, the Macintosh and desktop publishing, 1986 saw the launch of *The Seybold Report on Desktop Publishing*, a monthly publication. With no ad-vertising comment, the reporting and analysis of products and issues is of a calibre that tops. These publications, while not cheap, are worth the price. With continued fast paced developments in digital technologies yet a third publi-cation has just been added: *Digital Media: A Seybold Report*.

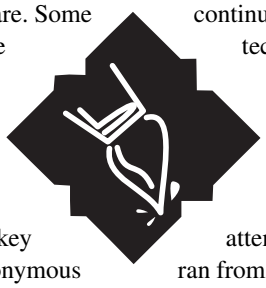
Another important offering from Seybold is the numerous seminars, in-cluding the Seybold Seminars held in late winter in Boston, the Seybold Digital World Conference held in June in Beverly Hills, the Seybold Computer Publishing Conference and Exposition held in late September or early October, the Seybold Newspaper Systems Tutorial held in November in Cambridge, MA, and the Seybold European Publishing Conference held in December. All of these are annual events.

To top it off Seybold also has a con-sulting group. Within the past year these operations, which currently employ 45 people worldwide, were bought out by the Ziff Communications Company.

Thus an interesting mixture of viewpoints from various sectors of the industry.

To give a quick rundown, Linotype was the first vendor of imagesetters to incorporate PostScript RIPs and within the past year has joined with Hell. In this prepress context Hell is the com-pany best known for developing the first marketable color scanners and much of the key electronic halftoning technology in use by all vendors today.

From Inform, Terry Westmacott presented an interesting paper on the impact of computer publishing techno-logies on the process of communication. This was the thought provoking session. Paul Brainerd is of course, well known in his role with Aldus in putting DTP in the market, marrying such platforms as the Mac and MS-DOS/Windows with PostScript. Too bad Aldus couldn't do some development on the NeXT. But I'm getting ahead of myself! John Sculley should be a personality well known to NeXT users. He used his time to present some of the latest Apple product line – here in terms of Postscript level 2 LaserWriters along with a new scanner and scanning software. Some would view that he overstated the impor-tance to the market of these products. These are nice products with incremen-tal technological improvements, but hardly revolutionary!



John Warnock is one of the key founders of Adobe which is synonymous with PostScript. Forever exploring new dimensions and opportunities in this area, John presented a demonstration of document interchange based on Adobe's recent work in developing the Multiple Master typefaces technology. Done with Macintosh, MS-DOS and NeXT plat-forms, this was of great interest to us as consumers of information.

Finally, Slate had the opportunity to try to dazzle us all with the introduction of their Pen Book "electronic book" computer. Presumably a version of NeXTstep could be engineered to run on such a product.

With the keynote stuff done, I can really only report on two other events of interest to the NeXT community as presented at the Conference. Perhaps the first was a non-event, that being the Apple-IBM agreement. A lot of fanfare indeed, with the conference schedule being altered at the last minute. Any real substance to all of this? As a NeXT user I have to admit to walking out of this session due to supreme pangs of bore-dom. NeXT has already accomplished 90% of what Apple/IBM claim to be aiming at for several years hence. When Jonathan Seybold put such a viewpoint to these big guys, the response was an emphatic denial – that in today's market the only possible solution to developing a next generation operating system and hardware was through a joint effort. Of course, not everyone may choose to agree with such a perspective on reality. Here's to looking at seeing NeXT-step running soon on a variety of other platforms!

On a more positive note for the future was the pre-sentation by Alvy Ray Smith of Pixar on IceMan. Currently under development, IceMan will enable continuous tone color imag-ing technology, somewhat akin to what PostScript is to line art. Ports to the Sun, SGI, PC, and NeXT are in the works.

The Exposition

Another 23,000 people attend just the Exposition which ran from October 2nd to 4th. Time now to focus on NeXT products found on the Exposition floor. In contrast to the Conference, NeXT related stuff was to be found in a wide range of places, some not so obvious. What follows is detailed in point form.

- Adobe – As the developer of Postscript, Adobe has produced the technology which is key to the NeXT. Adobe is in the process of making its font library available in NeXT format and had just recently introduced Illustrator version 3.0 for the NeXT. In addition, Adobe has just recently acquired TouchType from

RightBrain Software. As to news on the porting of Photoshop to the NeXT, there is nothing to report. Adobe products were displayed at both and their own and the NeXT booths.

- Altsys Corporation – Altsys is well known in the DTP community for the develop-ment of Mac software such as Aldus FreeHand and Aldus Fontographer. While Aldus makes use of some NeXTs, it has to date shown no inclination to develop products for the NeXT. News that Altsys was to pick up the ball in this department came one year ago with their Stealth development project which at the Exposition was shown in Alpha form as Virtuoso. This is an exciting pro-duct to say the least and should give Illustrator a run. Virtuoso features such capabilities as unlimited layers, editing text on screen and the ability to import both Aldus FreeHand 3.0 and Adobe Illustrator 3.0 files. Altsys was demonstrating this both at their own booth and at NeXT's. In addition, this product was one of those highlighted at the NeXT/Canon Press Conference. Can't wait to get my hands on this one!

- Bay Area NeXT Group (BANG) – This is perhaps the NeXT user group closest to the venue of the Seybold event, which is based in Palo Alto. BANG representatives were on hand at the NeXT booth to promote them-selves and hand out various goodies including copies of their just-off-the press BANG Newsletter. BANG is also involved in developing a CD-ROM, *Sex, Lies, & CD-ROM*, which should be out around the time NeXTstep 3.0 is released.

- Canon – They displayed a range of copier products including the Canon Color Laser Copiers along with some NeXTs. Hardly surprising given the relationship between NeXT and Canon, and the joint announce-ments made at their press conference.

- Compumation – They dis-played BureauMaster! for both the PC and Mac plat-forms. This product is service bureau management program and there was news sometime ago that a NeXT version was in the works. Upon visiting Compumation's booth, the updated news is that indeed much of the necessary software development was done. The feedback I got was that they found the NeXT environment great for development. However, with few machines in the service bureau marketplace they could not justify further development.
- Cube Technologies, Inc. – They fea-tured the Rio film recorder at the NeXT booth. This product has some interesting features including a variety of film back format options and Postscript imaging driven by the Display Postscript Server. Consequently, some interesting pricing of under US $6600. This is a product I'd like to put through some tests for presentation graphics applications. Bundling of a presentation software package – Concurrence, currently under develop-ment by Lighthouse Design – is in the works.
- Electronics for Imaging (EFI) – EFI is a young startup company to watch out for. Perhaps this is because the exper-tise behind the company is so strong. It was founded a couple of years ago by Efraim Arazi. Mr. Arazi founded Scitex in 1968 and served as its CEO until leaving to form EFI in 1989. The mis-sion of EFI is to develop color imaging software in order to facilitate predict-able quality color to whatever imaging system desired. Products under devel-opment include EPORT color appear-ance software, Cachet color touch-up and manipulation software, and the Fiery Color Laser RIPs to drive Canon and Xerox digital color copiers. On display at their booth as a technology demo was a NeXT linked via a SCSI bus to a Fiery recorder. Of interest to the end user is their Cachet software which goes a long way to putting color prepress operator skills into a software package. Manipulating color with Cachet is something a novice can do quite handily. Cachet is due out early in 1992, to be introduced first on the Mac. A NeXT version is slated for de-velopment sometime following. This of course reads as when EFI sees the market justifying such development.

- Frame Technology – They featured at both their own and at the NeXT booth the newly released FrameMaker 3.0. This product was also showcased at the joint-NeXT/Canon Press Conference.

- Hayes Microcomputer Products, Inc. – Hayes re-cently introduced an ISDN adapter which can be used with a variety of platforms. This product was on display hooked up to a couple of NeXT machines at the Pacific Bell booth.

- MicroNet Technology, Inc. – A well known supplier of SCSI storage de-vices, displayed several items in use at the NeXT booth. Strangely, there was no literature or display of NeXT version products at their own booth.
- NeXT – The NeXT booth was an ex-citing area in which to see a range of hardware and third party products. No new products from NeXT at this time, but some neat software. Pro-ducts from BOSS Logic, Epitome, HSD USA, Information Presentation Technologies, Insignia, Media Logic, Novell, Prism, Stone Design, and WordPerfect were being demonstrat-ed. An exciting new presentation program, Concurrence, was shown by Lighthouse Design.

- Pre-Press Technologies – They have produced a number of professional level color image processing packages for the Macintosh. These programs include a range of stand alone pro-ducts and add-ons to PageMaker and QuarkXpress. In addition they have just recently introduced a Macintosh-Hell Scanner interface. Nice products with the news earlier this year of a possible port to the NeXT and other UNIX platforms. But at the Pre-Press booth, I was informed that the in-tended development on the NeXT had soured. How unfortunate!

- Quark – Well known as the developer of QuarkXPress, which currently is widely regarded as the leading page make-up package on the Macintosh. A year ago, Quark had announced plans to port to the NeXT, even showing a demo at Seybold. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be happening. In pursuing the question at the Quark booth, one really gets the brush off. Disappointing to say the least.

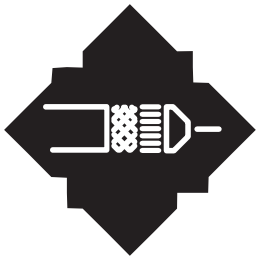
- Screen – This major Japanese player in the prepress market manufactures a wide range of products ranging from process cameras to electronic scan-ners. The Screen ISC-2010 scanner is a high end photomultiplier tube based drum scanner which scans directly in CMYK (as opposed to RGB). This product features a SCSI interface which allows connections to the Macintosh and with a new product – GammaScan! – a direct connection to the NeXT. This scanner interface was developed by Chromagrafx Imaging Systems of Hauppauge, New York. President of Chromagrafx, Doug Wyman informs me that if the devel-opment of a color image processing application such as Photoshop is much delayed, then they may well get involv-ed in such development initiatives.

- Second Glance – This is a start-up company made up of some energetic folks. The product of interest here is called ScanTastic, a scanner control software. On display at both the NeXT and Nikon booths, I was really impressed by the design. Nice stuff, and I want to get my hands on this ASAP. The planned product release date is November, 1991. Interface modules to date have been completed for the new Nikon LS-3510 slide scanner and the Epson ES-300C flatbed scanner.

- Ultimate Technographics Inc. – A Canadian company based in Montreal had a nice display for their Impostrip software. With the release of several large format (30" x 40") PostScript film recorders, the need for such impo-sition software is quite important. In this manner, PostScript files can be assembled without the need for hands-on film assembly. Apparently, a port of Impostrip to the NeXT in addition to versions now running on PC's and Macs is in the works.

Well here's to looking for lots more NeXT stuff when Seybold returns again on September 22 – 25 at the Moscone Center in San Francisco in 1992!

Finally, a word of appreciation to our friends at Advantage Computers, Paolo Bertoia and Mike Lee who were kind enough to treat this intrepid report-er to dinner. ◆



Gutenburg's Garage

Located on the Exposition site, Gutenberg's Garage was an exciting place to get some hands on demos – provided you were quick enough in line at the daily 10 a.m. opening times to register! On display here were setups by Agfa, Barneyscan, Electronics for Imaging, Kurta, NeXT, and Sun. I had the opportunity to attend both the EFI and NeXT offerings. At the EFI booth was a hands on demo of their pre-release Cachet color manipulation software. As mentioned elsewhere this was pretty nice stuff.

NeXT presented an improved studio over last year's setup – utilizing ten NeXTstation Colour systems networked to a fileserver, a Canon CLC, and Océ color printers. Several NeXTedge staff members were on hand to lead a news-letter tutorial session. It was well run with a tutorial leader and on floor assis-tants. Moving quickly we all had a chance to assemble a page using Adobe Illustrator 3.0 along with Adobe Touch Type, WordPerfect, and NeXTmail. It was a busy hour-long period. Unfor-tunately – this is a criticism – neither the Canon CLC nor the Océ printers were working at the time. A shame in that in demonstrating the production of a news-letter, one should be able to get the desired output! Oh well, I did get a nice special edition Gutenberg Garage NeXT t-shirt.

NeXT/Canon Announcements

Donovan Whistler

The evening of Wednesday, October 2nd, was lots of fun what with the NeXT/Canon news conference held at the Fairmont Hotel. In my role as a reporter for VNUS, I made sure that I could get in by acquiring a press-pass, not that I really needed to, but it did give me access to the press facilities (read food). It was a standing room only crowd with perhaps 200 people in attendance

The event got under way with Steve Jobs and Hideharu Takemoto, president and CEO of Canon U.S.A. making their respective announcements about a new strategic joint marketing agreement. In the U.S. market at least Canon will now be marketing its colour copier products with NeXT workstations. These include the CLC 300 and 500 copiers and the Colour Bubble-Jet Copier A1. Thus Canon is now a value-added reseller of NeXT machines. Given the ownership, business and technology relationships already established between NeXT and Canon, this seems like an obvious di-rection to move in. What with the recent introduction of PostScript RIPs for the Canon CLC the timing is ripe to target the in-house colour publishing market for larger corporations. In essence, Canon will be marketing a DTP front end for its copiers. Apparently this marketing agreement extends to some Canon NOMDA (National Office Machines Dealer Association) dealers in Canada as well.

These announcements dispensed with, it was on to some more fun with demos of both newly introduced pro-ducts and those under development. First off was a FrameMaker 3.0 demo (applause), a demo of Virtuoso from Altsys (increased level of applause), a presentation program from Lighthouse Design called Concurrence (increased level again of applause), and finally a demo of the initial work being done on a page make-up program by RightBrain Software, tentatively called Paste-Up. The applause levels kept going up! Okay, so who needs QuarkXpress on the NeXT?

With official stuff now out of the way, the floor was open to questions to Steve Jobs. These ranged from questions on the newly introduced Kanji version of NeXTstep, the development of NeXT RIPs for imagesetters, development for niche markets such as medical imaging and prepress (possibly some news on the way from Scitex might not be a sur-prise), the porting of NeXTstep to other platforms and the hard to avoid question on the Apple/ IBM alliance. Steven Jobs predicted that they will do well if in 4 to 5 years, something as good as NeXTstep of today is achieved. The ensuing applause came as no surprise.

The extremely upbeat session was followed by necessary body replenish-ments and a chance to mingle amongst the people and equipment on display . ◆

Notes

The following are excerpts from press releases for two of the products mentioned in Mr. Whistler's article:

- Altsys – " ... (Virtuoso) offers advanced editing capabilities such as the ability to edit in Preview mode and 99 levels of undo and redo options. Virtuoso also provides the ability to import and ma-nipulate TIFF (tagged image file) files. Artwork created in Aldus FreeHand 3.0 and Adobe Illustrator 3.0 can be imported for use in Virtuoso on NeXT workstations."
- Lighthouse Design – "Concurrence is the only presentation application for ANY platform that lets users simulta-neously edit both presentations and outlines, without going back and forth between different modes ... "

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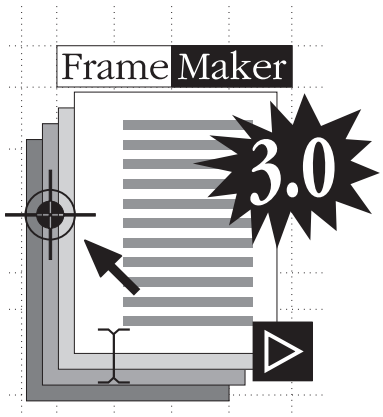
FrameMaker 3.0 Review



Joseph Chin

FrameMaker 3.0 has just been released for the NeXT in early October. As a Frame authorized 3rd party consultant, I was able to convince Frame to ship me an early production copy for use in one of my latest product documentation contracts. Well, after using FrameMaker 3.0 for several weeks, what do I have to say about it? Read on ...

FrameMaker is a very powerful and feature packed "document publishing" program with a wealth of page-layout, word processing, graphic drawing and book publishing tools. It is very well suited for the production of highly structured long documents; e.g. product and user manuals, technical reference manuals, etc. Many detailed reviews of FrameMaker's features have been pub-lished in various magazines, including the Fall 1991 issue of *NeXTWORLD*. Therefore, I will only touch on features that are new and/or improved for FrameMaker version 3.0.

New Features

Tables

Prior to version 3.0, FrameMaker did not have any table feature to speak of. It took some serious hacks and work around to do tables in version 2.x – the user would either need to setup tedious mazes of tabs or complicated arrays of anchored frames.

The new cell-based table feature is easy to setup and maintain. Tables can be broken across columns or pages. Each table is assigned a format "tag" not unlike that of the paragraph format "tag". A wealth of properties can be defined for a table tag; they include starting position, alignment, ruling, shading, etc. The rows and columns can be resized as easily as in a GUI-based spreadsheet program. Graphics can also included in the table. Normal character and paragraph tags can be applied to any text in the table cells.

Conditional Text

If you ever have to produce multiple variations of a document using one base document, you will appreciate the con-ditional text feature. The best reason to use conditional text instead of creating separate documents for each variation is that all changes and revisions are done in one document. Thus making it much easier to manage documents and reduce the possibility of inconsistent informa-tion or errors. FrameMaker 3.0 allows an unlimited number of user-defined condition tags, which can be applied to almost any elements (e.g. text, table rows, graphics within anchored frames, etc.). To produce a specific version of a document with conditional tags, you simply spe-cify which conditional tags to "hide" and which ones to "show".

Improved Colour Support

FrameMaker 3.0 can now import 24-bit TIFF and EPS colour images. But FrameMaker will not print CYMK se-parations for imported colour images. Colour images imported into version 3.0 running on a monochrome NeXT sys-tem will be displayed in grayscale. FrameMaker 3.0 still supports all the spot colour options available in previous versions of FrameMaker.

Fixes and Improvements

Some of the other fixes and improve-ments in FrameMaker 3.0:

- Supposedly improved performance in certain areas. This is not very obvious.
- Adheres more closely to the NeXT application interface guidelines – the "Print" selection is now in right place on the main FrameMaker menu panel, the "Request" selection in the main menu has been replaced by the more NeXT-like "Services" selection. The "Windows" submenu has been added so that you can easily access all opened documents.
- Improved support for recognizing non-standard font weights and varia-tions. Still no font preview!
- A "recover" file containing your latest work is created automatically when FrameMaker quits unexpectedly. This makes it possible to recover any work that may be otherwise lost to "data hell".
- Improved Postscript compliance. FrameMaker 2.0d had many problems printing to the Linotronic imagesetter. This has been fixed in version 3.0. Problems with printing to page sizes bigger than 8.5"x11"have also been remedied.
- Imports EPS 3.0 and Adobe Illustrator 3.0 files directly, without the need for any Postscript hacking!

- Here are some more improvements and fixes mentioned in the version 3.0 documentation – improved cross-reference tracking; generating lists of fonts, imported graphics, or external cross-references; indexing group titles; rename Graphics window to Tools window to more closely identify contents; improvements in Hypertext; improvements in indexing features; improved support for international hyphenation; improved customization of keyboard map.

Other Goodies

While going through the support documents and files supplied with version 3.0, I came across some high quality clipart. These clip art are fine example of high quality illustration that can be created using the drawing tools built into FrameMaker.

Bugs

FrameMaker 3.0 repeatedly crashed on me when copying certain illustrations created with drawing tools in 2.0d to a new document created with 3.0. The engineers at Frame are hard at work trying to figure out the cause(s). The “recover” feature worked and it came through for me after every crash.

There are occasional problems with “screen dirt”. But everything can be cleared up on subsequent screen refresh-es or by hitting [Ctrl-l] to force a screen redraw.

Gripes and Wishes

- Better full colour support – print separations of imported images from within FrameMaker 3.0; more colour and printing support, e.g. automatic traps and chokes, control of screens angles and frequencies, etc.
- Some manipulation of imported images.
- Font preview in Paragraph Format and Character Format panels please!
- Better rotation controls – 90 degree rotation increment is a joke!
- Automatic text wrap around irregular-ly shaped objects.
- Automatic page break for table cells.
- Imported text is still not dynamically linked to the source file.
- Generate detailed reports on usage of tags and other properties upon request.

Conclusion

FrameMaker 3.0 is undoubtedly a significant improvement over its predecessors . The table feature is a real blast and this feature alone has already paid for my copy of FrameMaker.

Besides going through the Frame tutorial, I haven’t put the conditional text feature to work on a real project yet. But it can potentially save someone lots of time and effort when it comes to creat-ing multiple variations of the same base document.

FrameMaker 3.0 shows that Frame is pulling away from the curse of the “lowest common denominator” syn-drome resulting from pre-occupation with multi-platform compatibility, and is now making FrameMaker 3.0 more NeXT-like. FrameMaker will continue to be the leading “document publish-ing” software if Frame chooses to let FrameMaker take full advantage of the publishing powers found in our wonder-ful NeXT computers. ◆

VNUS News Toolbox

The *VNUS Newsletter* is assembled at *Wordcraft Designs* and *datapanik designs* on an 040 NeXTcube, an 030 NeXTcube, a NeXTstation Colour, a 386SX, a Tandy WP2 Partable Word Processor and occasionally a Macintosh llfx.

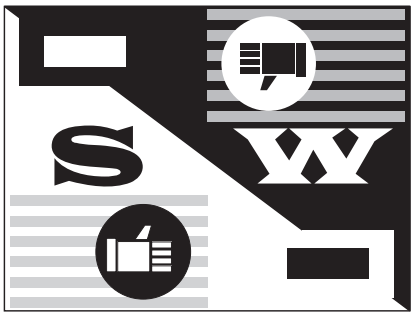
Some articles were gathered using NewsGrazer and NeXTmail. Others were written using WriteNow and the WP2. lllustrations were drawn with Corel Draw on the 386SX and Adobe lllustrator on the NeXT.

lmages were scanned on a Sharp 600dpi scanner and screen shots were captured using NeXT-bundled applications. lmages were prepared using Adobe Photoshop on the Macintosh llfx and Aldus PhotoStyler on the 386SX. Screen shots and some images were prepared using lcon on the NeXTs. Fonts are all from the Adobe Library. The pages were laid-out using FrameMaker 3.0 and output to paper positive on a Linotronic L300 at WYSIWYG Graphics. Plates were shot and the newsletter printed and prepar-ed at Made 'n a Minute Printers’ Howe Street Location.

This list is by no means an exhaus-tive accounting of all the tools used. The newsletter production staff is happy to answer inquiries concerning the methods and materials used.

November, 1991

Shareware Review



Rory Gibson

The software mentioned in this article may be found at the following FTP archives:

- **sonata.cc.purdue.edu** (*referred to as* **Purdue**)
- **cs.orst.edu** (*referred to as* **orst**)

Rating Scheme

A definite must have!
Interesting, but not very useful!
Don't even bother!

BackSpace.tar.Z purdue

Finally a Screen Saver that not only saves screens, but is fun too! Produced by Samuel Streeper at NeXT, BackSpace comes with a variety of screen saver mo-dules ranging from energetic sperm to a bouncing Amiga type ball. It also in-cludes a screen locking feature, optional Kanji interface, and best of all you can run your screen saver in the background ! Also included is all the info on how to add your own screen saver modules.

So if the urge for pink elephants in bathtubs tickles your fancy ... A good App to tease Mac users with!

DefaultMgr1.1.tar.Z orst

Have you ever wondered what your application defaults are set to? Or the correct default names to use with the dwrite command? Well DefaultMgr is for you! DefaultMgr provides a way of looking at all the defaults that are set for all your installed applications. You can set any of the defaults as well as save and load entire default database. This last feature allows you to save your defaults on a disk, then load them into any machine you may be working on.

Entirely useful.

TimeMon-2.2.tar.Z orst

Look Ma, no windows! That's right, an application in an icon! From the creator of Stuart comes TimeMon, a nifty little CPU meter. Detect those runaway pro-grams, catch those delinquent users that keep remote logging into your machine, this app lets you see what's really hap-pening below that slick interface! The icon consists of a radial dial that dis-plays system time (black), user time (dark grey), nice time (light gray) and idle time (white). Outer rings give an indication of the average CPU usage.

I wouldn't login without it!

Halloween.app.tar.Z purdue

Astounding choreography, beautiful dancers, accompanied by a really funky beat. More of a demo than an applica-tion but worth checking out.

Cute, but totally useless! A real hit with the kids.

Opener.tar.Z purdue

One application for all your uncompres-sing needs! Will restore .Z, tar, shar, lzh, and uu UNIX files, .hqx, bin, and sit Mac files, .arc, zip, and zoo PC files and will even recognize .PS (in caps) as a postscript file. You can also create .tar.Z packages by dropping some files on the Opener icon. But that's not all! Opener effectively allows you to preview the contents of an archive. When you dou-ble-click a compressed file the contents will appear in a separate window. You can then select the files you want, and move them into your File Viewer.

Highly recommended application.

MailHelper1.1.tar.Z purdue

MailHelper is designed to add functions to the non-NeXT mode of the NeXT Mail Application. It will allow you to reformat the line length of your message so as to avoid unsightly line wrapping at the receiving end. You can also add ">" characters in the first column to signify that the text is being forwarded. The last feature of MailHelper allows you to add either an ASCII or an RTF .signature file anywhere in the message. MailHelper is accessed through the Services menu.

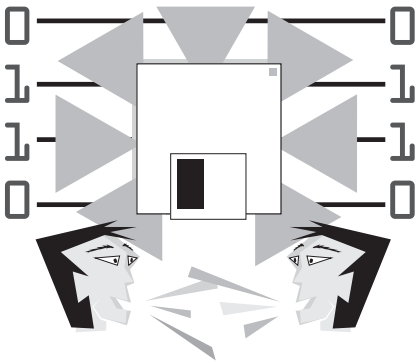
Very helpful if you send lots of mail to non-Next machines.

Image Viewer-0.9a.tar.Z orst

ImageViewer is a multi-format image viewer for the NeXT. It will display atkras, gif, itex, pbm, pgm, ppm, macp, mtek, eps, ras, rle, icon, tiff, face, xbm, ilisp, brush, and ais format images. An added bonus is that you can also save files in most formats, thus giving a way to convert between image formats. A neat feature is that when you shrink a window the icon displays a miniature copy of the original image!

Very useful for displaying/convert-ing old Sun raster images. ◆

DIT FloppyWorks



Jiro Nakamura

As the group organizer of FuNK (Finger Lakes NeXT Users Group), companies occasionally send me NeXT software packages for review/demo purposes. When I have some spare time, I occa-sionally write reviews on them and post them to USENET and allow them to be used in user group magazines such as the VNUS Newsletter. This review is slightly different from the rest, however, for one main reason — I actually bought the software but I later returned it, that story follows ...

I bought FloppyWork for two main reasons, one was to facilitate the transfer of my SO's thesis from a Mac to the NeXT, where we were going to typeset it in FrameMaker. The second reason is that it is annoying to not be able to read the occasional Mac disk that floats by. The ad in NeXTConnection sounded good, so I made the plunge.

To those of you not familiar with FloppyWorks, it is a software program that allows you to read and write Mac 1.44MB disks with your internal or ex-ternal 2.88MB drives. It can do other things such as reading/writing MS-DOS disks, but they are of little interest since NeXT System 2 can do that automagi-cally anyway. It also can read and write much more than Mac floppies, it also supports Mac hard drives and remov-able media drives (such as Syquest). This makes the product strategic in the Mac–NeXT connectivity market.

Many folks, myself included, would like to be able to read/write Mac 400KB and 800KB disks in addition to high density (1.44MB) disks. Simply put, this is not possible unless you have a Mac 400KB/800KB disk drive because this disk system is totally incompatible with the NeXT/MS-DOS 360KB/720KB/1.44MB systems at the "mechanical" level. Apple tweak their drives to get an extra 80KB at the expense of ever hop-ing to get other drives to read their disks. The Apple SuperFloppy, being made by Apple, is an exception, of course.

DIT also makes a drive that can read and write only Mac 400KB/800KB disks. It is called the CubeFloppy Plus and retails for $595 with FloppyWorks. However, this drive does not read NeXT extended density (2.88MB) disks, the disks that NeXT uses for its standard distribution.

Installation

Installing the package was quite simple since DIT uses the new Installer packages. Problems that people may run into are that you have to be root to in-stall the program because it installs the files "/usr/filesystems/macintosh.fs/∗". Along with these support files, it also places the application file FloppyWorks in your /LocalApps or other directory (such as ~/Apps, but since it messes with the root file system, you may as well put it in /LocalApps). The whole package installed takes up about 400KB.

A pet peeve is that DIT forces you to enter your name and organization when you first run the program. This to me is only slightly annoying, but what made it aggravating is that it insists on writing said information on the original floppy disk. This will cause problems if you ever decide to sell your copy to someone else.

General Impression

To briefly summarize, FloppyWorks is: unintuitive, expensive, but works. If you can hold off until System 3.0, you won't need this program unless DIT overhauls it.

Unintuitive

FloppyWorks' directory browsers are ugly, non-standard, and don't even work that well. You can't select direc-tories by typing in their names (see *Bugs* below), thus forcing the user to have to do tremendously circuitous routes to get anywhere. The menu is ill-structured and confusing. The panel buttons are not well placed and are generally unin-tuitive. They desperately need a user interface designer to have a look at this program.

DIT informs me that a newer ver-sion of FloppyWorks is due out next Spring and will costs $35. My personal feeling about this is that this upgrade is sorely needed now and should be offer-ed to prior owners for free (especially in view of the rumoured System 3.0 capa-bilities, see below). By golly, a software package that costs $200 should at least include 1 free upgrade.

The ad blurb in NeXTConnection makes it sound like FloppyWorks has "built-in filters ... supported file types including RTF, TIFF, WriteNow, WKS, WK1, SYLK, WKZ, EPS, PS, and ASCII. It's the software you need for serious file sharing."

When I originally read the blurb, I had expected sophisticated file exchange protocols akin to MacLinkPC or Apple File Exchange. Instead, FloppyWorks "file-

exchange" capability is a bunch of elementary converters or strippers (CR-LF to LF, strips control characters, strips non-ASCII, etc.). This is *not* what I call a real file translator. So for you folks who want to convert your Mac documents to a NeXT document, you must have the same program on both ends. This pro-gram ain't gonna translate the file types for you. It's only a file *exchanger*, not a file *translator.*

DIT tells me that this was a mis-understanding between their copy writer and them, a misunderstanding that has *just been corrected*. Hopefully their ads will be more truthful in the future.

The latest copy of NeXTWorld (Winter '91) has a slightly changed ad. The ad now reads "And file transfer fil-ters provide a simple means of adjust data files for different word processing, spreadsheet, database, and graphic for-mats." Again this is not very clear and can be easily construed as misleading. FloppyWorks will not let you convert between "different word processing for-mats" or any other type of file conver-sion.

Expensive

FloppyWorks can be purchased for $185 through NeXTConnection. It is $250 list and has an academic discount of around 30% (contact DIT for that).

This is a bit too expensive for me. For $200, I want a much higher quality product than DIT provides. Neither the manual nor the software seemed very refined. At the very least, I would like an index to the manual. And having the manual on-line like many other software (Soft-PC, FrameMaker, Diagram!, etc.) would have been nice too.

Also, the bit about touting its "file exchange filters" was a bit too much, in my opinion. Basically, FloppyWorks does no more file filtering than one could do using the UNIX program "tr" that comes standard with the NeXT. It will not let you change MacPaint to TIFF, or perform any other true file conversion.

But Works

It does its primary function of read-ing Mac disks fairly well. The transfer rate seems fast. It also keeps you inform-ed of the bytes transferred.

It also is supposed to support Mac hard drives and removable media. I have no way of testing out this claim, but this sounds impressive. It means that compa-nies switching over from the Mac to the NeXT can simply connect their old Mac hard drives or use their old Syquest car-tridges (with an appropriate drive) to the NeXT, launch FloppyWorks, and have immediate access to their files. The beauty is, you can keep the drive attach-ed all the time, just in case you want to return to the Mac (what heresy!).

Another nice feature is that it will automagically launch FloppyWorks if you insert a Mac disk and FloppyWorks isn't already launched. This is a really handy feature. For some strange reason, you have to have the "Public Window Manager" setting in Preference set to "on" while using this feature, so it is un-suitable for paranoid networked NeXTs (it's a security hazard).

The icons are nice icons, too.

Bugs

My only "bug" was problems with the interface. The browser did not work as it should. DIT says that the browser object was created from scratch under System 1.0 , so I would have sympathiz-ed, but since the next upgrade is not free, I have no sympathy.

I have not found any serious bugs that will damage either your original Macintosh disk or the NeXT file system. The file transfer itself goes smoothly and does not seem to have any serious faults. So my only complaints are about the in-terface. Here's an example of the *wacky* browser:

There is a small form underneath the browser. "Aha", I thought, "I can type a pathname in it to quickly snarf a file. Let's see, let me quickly jump to /tmp to grab something."

I type "/tmp" in the form.

"No go, bozo," says FloppyWorks as it quickly makes a file with that name on the target disk (the opposite side). What the #@!?

Further playing around with it re-veals the bug. Select something on the target drive (right hand side), then in the left hand side "message area", type some garbage. Hit [return] and voila, FloppyWorks will rename the target file name to the garbage name, even though they were on opposite sides of the panel, so to speak. Soft-ware quality control, folks.

Problems

DIT needs to do three main things:

- Lower the price, it's too high. You might get 4 times more sales at $100 then at $250. If Lighthouse can sell Diagram! (which took a lot of work, believe me) at $25 academic, then FloppyWorks can be sold at $100 or less. MacLinkPlus/PC is $129 via NeXTConnection.
- Rework the interface and upgrade old user for free. If I pay $200 for a simple utility, I better damn well get free up-grades.
- Start having some real file translators. License the AFE format from Apple and use their pre-built translators. I think DIT has gone half of the way with FloppyWorks, I'd like them to go all the way and have a full blown file conversion/translation program. What about it, DIT?

Conclusion

In summary, I thought it was too highly priced, the user interface was un-intuitive and buggy, but all in all, it does the job adequately. I would like to see real file filters and transparent filesystem support.

I should give some more credit to the folks at DIT. To date, I believe that they are the only people who are really selling software that can read Mac disks. This involved a lot of digging around in the internals of the Mac file system and it seems like they did an excellent job of this.

The latest issue of NeXTWorld has a statement from a software manager at NeXT that "native support for high-density

Apple floppy disks [will be add-ed with System 3.0]" (*NeXTWorld*, Winter 1991, p. 23). If so, then DIT has about six months to turn FloppyWorks from being just a simple-minded Mac disk reader into a serious tool for file conversion. I'm not sure whether NeXT licensed DIT for the ability to read Mac disks, but it will undoubtedly affect the market for FloppyWorks.

If you need a lot of files transferred from the Mac to the NeXT, have the same program running on both compu-ters. But if you are desparate for time, and are feeling a bit rich, I would recom-mend this program. It also has the little- mentioned but great feature of support-ing Mac hard drives and removable hard drives. This may be the quickest and simplest way of transferring or accessing large amounts of Mac data yet. This is yet another reason I wish DIT would work on FloppyWorks more – it has so much promise!

But if you are poor or don't have that much money, I'd recommend find-ing a friend with Apple File Exchange and a SuperFloppy drive, and exchange the files via MS-DOS floppies. Or wait until System 3.0.

Or, if you are feeling really rich and silly, buy a Mac IIfx and MacLinkPC, and connect your NeXT to the Mac that way. I did this for a while, it actually worked seamlessly and quite well.

In the end, I took DIT's money back guarantee. FloppyWorks currently does not give me my $200 worth. I'm interes-ted in reviewing it again when the newer release comes out. Perhaps they will take some of my suggestions to heart (I have sent them a copy of this article).

Summary

Application Type: Floppy exchange program
Version Tested: V2.2d (commercially bought)
JiroRating: ** (fair)
Description: Let's you read/write Mac 1.44MB and PC, UNIX 2.88MB disks on your NeXT. Also has hard drive support for MacOS.
Price: Normal – $250 US
NeXTConnection – $185 US
Academic – $175 US
Contact: Digital Instrumentation Technology
127 Eastgate Dr. #20500
Los Alamos, NM 87544
(505) 662-1459

The DIT person I spoke to mentioned two other products which I have never heard of: Pacific Micro's Common-Link (SPARCstations) lists for $495 and PLI's Mac-to-DOS (PC) lists for $139. I'm pretty amazed by these prices (espe-cially since he used them for justifying DIT's $250 price tag). In my humble opinion, something such as Illustrator which took years to develop may cost $500 or so, but a simple, single-minded utility should *not* have to cost more than $100.

MacinDisk

MDTB allows a user to read files off 1.4 Meg Macintosh disks onto a NeXT hard disk. It also translates Mac files of type "TEXT" into standard NeXT text files, and it uses a standard NeXT brow-ser to display the files in a hierarchical fashion.

The demo version of MacinDisk ToshBrowser (MDTB) by Bill Roth is now available for FTP from the Purdue archive (sonata.cc.purdue.edu) as:

/pub/next/2.0-release/demos/MacinDisk1.1.tar.Z.

If you have any problems getting or using the demo version from the FTP site, please let me know. Also, if you would like more information about MDTB 1.1 please send the request by electronic mail to:

info@impact.shaman.com

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Notes

The following are excerpts from the Octo-ber 16, 1991 press release from DIT:

- "From now until the end of 1991, DIT will be offering FloppyWorks for a special reduced price of $99. DIT's domestic sales manager, Jeff Lawrence, said the price reduction was based on user feedback."
- "Lawrence also said that DIT will be making a special offer to all registered users of FloppyWorks for OnDuty, their new scheduler and information manager, to be released soon. Users will qualify for this offer by sending in their FloppyWorks registration card, and the offer will apply to all registered users, including those who purchased before the special $99 offer on FloppyWorks. Details of the OnDuty offer will be announced soon."

Well, I jumped at the offer and purchased a copy of FloppyWorks at a decent price of $69US from NeXTConnection (phone: 1-800-800-NeXT). At that low a price, I can't go too wrong! I guess actions from less-than-satisfied customers such as Jiro made a DIT re-think their marketing stra-tegy.

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Creating Application Icons with Icon

Martin Frauendorf

Icon is a demonstration application bundled with every NeXT machine. Its author, Keith Ohlfs, describes Icon as "...a tool for editing bitmap images on the NeXT computer." However, help for Icon is non-existent and Keith's help panel comment that Icon is best learned through trial and error does little to in-spire confidence, either in experienced users or NeXT neophytes. Unfortunate-ly, this has led to an under utilization of Icon, which with a little patience and experimentation, can be tamed.

Icon is a powerful application with a cornucopia of features including any-thing from text manipulation to the editing and animation of bitmaps. This article will simply be an introduction to using Icon as a tool for creating icons, either from scratch or by modifying existing ones, for use as application or button icons.

Icon Panels

There are several panels in Icon which you need to be familiar with in order to create an icon. They are the Tool Panel (Figure 1), the Inspector Panel (Figures 2), the Colour Panel (Figure 4), and the Detail Panel (Figure 5). The accompanying figures contain detailed explanation of the functions of each panel.

Creating an Icon – a Tutorial

Before we start the tutorial section of this article, some preamble is neces-sary. Icon has an inconvenient "auto-quit" feature which selects itself at the most inopportune times. So, save often when working with Icon. Also, set the appropriate bit-plane depth for your machine in the "Info → Preferences" panel, which hides itself behind the Tool Inspector. You can set the bit-plane depth with the pull-down menu titled "Buffer Resolution". This would be 2-bit gray for monochrome systems, 16-bit colour for NeXTstation colour sys-tems, and 32-bit colour for the mighty NeXTdimension systems. This seems to reduce the frequency with which Icon crashes. However, Icon will run without problems when "Medicine will cure death and government will repeal taxes ... ", to borrow a quote from the Fall '91 issue of *NeXTWORLD*. In order to pre-vent Icon core files from taking up your disk space – which have the nasty habit of hiding in the Icon.app directory – you need to add the these two lines to your "/etc/rc.local" file (see Issue 1 of the *VNUS Newsletter* for details):

```
unlimit coredumpsize limit
coredumpsize 0
```

Now, onward with the tutorial section of this article. There are two ways to create an icon, from scratch or by using and modifying some existing image. I will discuss both approaches.

Figure 1 – Tool Panel

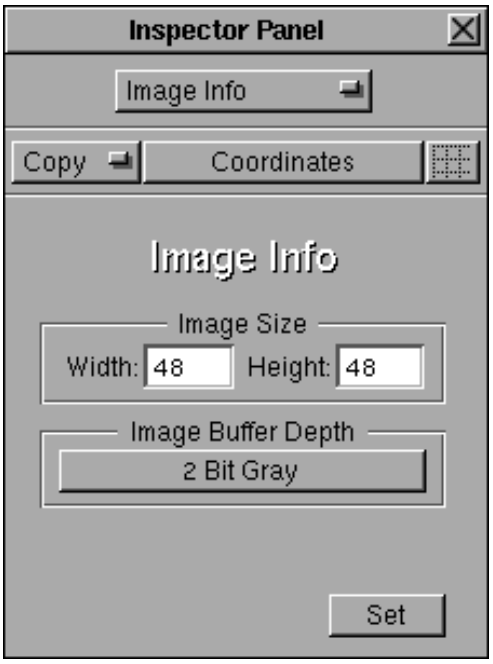
The Tool Panel is used to pick various drawing and selection tools and is brought up by selecting the "Tools → Tools" menu item. It also appears when you first launch Icon. This panel allows you, for in-stance, to select a pencil tool, a line tool, and a se-lection rectangle tool.

Creating an Icon From Scratch

The best way to create an applica-tion icon from scratch is to load an existing icon, erase it, and then draw your icon. The following information is based on Michael Mahoney's excellent Interface Builder tutorial (available on the FTP archives or ask your favorite VNUS executive) in

Figure 2 – Inspector Panel

The Inspector panel is brought up with the "Tools → Inspector" menu item and is mostly used to change the attributes of the va-rious drawing tools. It has a few other guises as well which can be selected by dragging on the pull-down menu currently labelled as "Tool Inspector" at the top of the panel. We will limit ourselves to the "Tool Inspector" and "Image Info" faces of this panel. You can use this panel to change the width of the line drawn by the pencil tool or resize a part of an image selected with the selec-tion tool. Note that the contents of the Inspector Panel change as you select various tools from the Tool Panel. In order to resize the image window, you need to use the "Image Info" pull-down menu item and edit the width and height fields.to set its width and height.



which he has writ-ten a section on creating an application icon. I have added the detailed instruc-tions on creating an icon with a trans-parent background.

1. For your icon's template, you can use the icon in "/NextDeveloper/Exam ples/BusyBox/BusyBoxApp.tiff." Open it using the "Image → Open" menu item.
2. To create a transparent background for your icon and erase the existing icon. Select the rectangle tool from the Tool Panel, set the opacity to zero in the Colour Panel, and drag out a rectangle over the existing BusyBox icon. You can verify that your new icon's background is transparent by pressing the "1" key. You should see a scrolling marble background in the image window.
3. You can now create your icon with any of the tools in the Tool Panel. Make sure you set the opacity in the Colour Panel back to 100 for opaque lines or some other value if you want to use any transparency effects. To save your icon, use the "Image → Save As" menu item. If you want the trans-parency or alpha channel of the image preserved, make sure the alpha button is be enabled.

Modifying an Existing Image For Your Icon

To borrow another image for your icon, either in whole or in part, you need to load the image or parts of the image by using one of the following menu se-lections: "Image → Open" to open an existing image in a new image window; "Image → Import" to bring an existing image into the current image window as a selection; "Image → Grab" to grab an image from the screen and place it in a new image window; "Image → Grab Selection" to grab an image from the screen and place it into an existing im-age window as a selection. For example, open the image in "/NextLibrary/Refe rences/Webster-Dictionary/pictures/apogee.tiff".

Let's say you wanted to use the planet without the orbiting satellite as an

Figure 3 –
Selection Tool Inspector

The selection tool is also known as a marquee or lasso. This panel is particularly useful in manipu-lating icons yet it is one of the more cryptic panels in Icon. As it turns out, the standard cut/copy/paste operations don't work as expected in Icon. They seem to only operate within the confines of a selection rectangle; i.e. paste won't modify your image, it will only paste a copy of what you have cut/copied into the selection rectangle. Instead, you must use the Marquee/Lasso options in the Inspector Panel for the selec-tion tool. The following is an attempt to explain the meanings of the Marquee/Lasso options:

- is a cut operation which removes the contents of the selection rectangle from your image.
- is a copy operation which makes a copy of the selection rectangle. It should be noted that this is the default operation of the selection tool; i.e. dragging out a selection rectangle makes a copy of your image enclosed by the selection rec-tangle which can then be positioned by clicking within the selection rectangle and then dragging.
- represents a paste operation which pastes the contents of the selection rectan-gle onto your image. Be aware that after you have pasted the rectangle, the selection rectangle is still visible and can be removed by simple clicking some-where outside of the selection rectangle. The results of the paste operation are then visible.
- is used to create animated bitmaps which is beyond the scope of this article.
- represents a fill operation which fills the selection rectangle with the current colour.
- is still a mystery to me.
- seems to have no effect, so I'll ignore it.
- represents a shearing tool; i.e. it translates the vertical coordinates of the selec-tion rectangle by an amount proportional to their horizontal coordinates.
- represents a rotation of the selection rectangle.
- represents a scaling operation.
- flips (or mirror image) the selection about the horizontal axis,
- flips the selection about the vertical axis.

application icon. You will need to crop off everything outside the radius of the planet, replace the opaque back-ground with a transparent one, remove the dashed lines over the planet, and then resize it to a 48 x 48 pixel applica-tion icon. Before you start, however, you will need to use Icon's grab tool to grab the planet portion of the image and dis-play it in a new image window using the "Image → Grab" menu item. For some reason the Webster TIFF images are in some format which Icon can load but cannot save. The messages, "TIFF error: NeXT encoding is not implemented," and "AppKit: TIFF error 5" are written to the

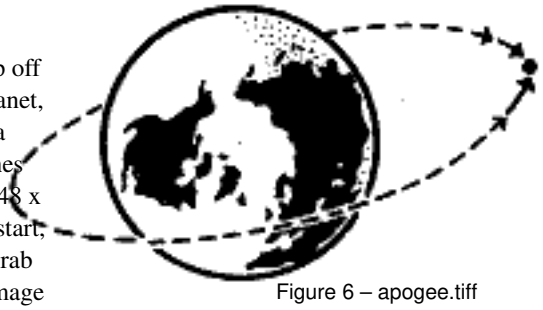


Figure 6 – apogee.tiff

console (made visible by selecting "Tools → Console" from the Workspace menu).

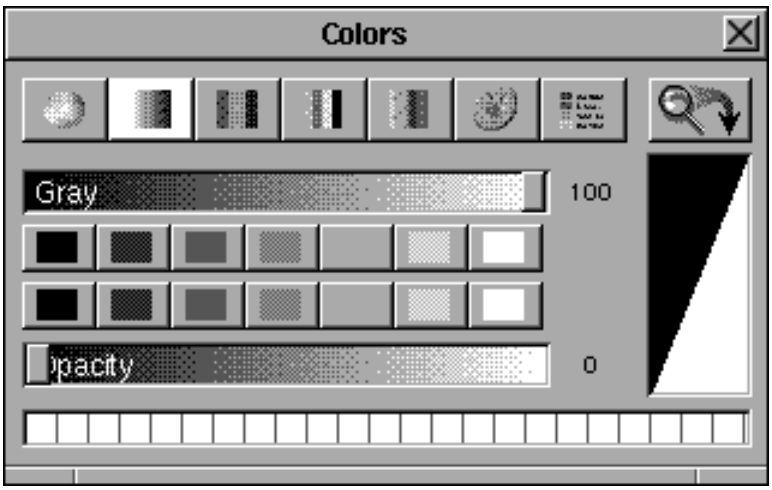
Creating a Transparent Background

You should now have figure 7 as your starting point for manipulating the planet image. You will now replace the opaque background with a transparent one. Use the "Edit → Select All" menu command to place a selection rectangle around the entire image. Now bring up the Colour Panel ("Tools → Colors"). Click on the magnifying glass in the upper right-hand corner of the Colour Panel, drag the resulting magni-fying glass cursor over to the planet image and click somewhere on the pla-net's white background. What you have done is pick the background colour and place it in the Colour Panel's colour well (the rectangle underneath the magnifying glass button). Now click–and–drag

Figure 4 – Colour Panel

This panel is brought up with the "Tools → Colors" menu item. This panel allows you to work in a number of colour selection models such as the NeXT's colour picker, grayscale, or RGB, and to set the current drawing colour. It should be noted that colour includes NeXT's alpha channel or transparency. The effect of a particu-lar transparency value depends on the compositing operator used to image the colour. Why is this important? You will notice that when you drag certain icons around the Workspace, you can see the background of the Workspace within the icon or even through some features of the icon. For example, the application icon for Icon shows the background around the pencil and through the shadow cast by the pencil. To improve the look of your icons, it is important for them to have a transpa-rent background. The background of the workspace or a button can then show through your icon, hiding the icon's boundary.

Transparent paint is used as follows: in the tool inspector panel there is a pull-down menu of composi-ting operators



such as "copy", "sover" (Source OVER), and "sin" (Source IN). If you were drawing with the pencil tool, it is possible to draw with transparent paint and yet still see the results. This is because the copy com-positing operator (the default) ignores transparency. To see which parts of your icon are transparent, as opposed to which parts are simply the same colour as the background, press the 1 key. A scrolling marble background makes it explicit where transparent paint exists.

When you are using the selection tool, it is possible to set the compositing operator to "sover", thus making the selection rectangle trans-parent where there is no image (since the background of a new icon window is transparent by default), making it easier to place a selection.

from the Colour Panel's colour well to the left-most colour well in the Inspector Panel.

Set the current colour to 0 opacity by sliding the opacity slider all of the way to the left in the Colour Panel. You should see the Colour Panel's colour well change to two rectangles, one white and one black. Now click and drag a colour sample from the Colour Panel's colour well to the right-most colour well in the Inspector Panel. Click the "do it" button underneath this colour well. Now click on the "paste-down" button in the Inspector Panel for the selec-tion tool (third button from the left, top row in the matrix of buttons represent-ing editing operations). You should now have a transparent background which you can confirm with the scrolling mar-ble background by pressing the 1 key. To get rid of the selection rectangle, simple click

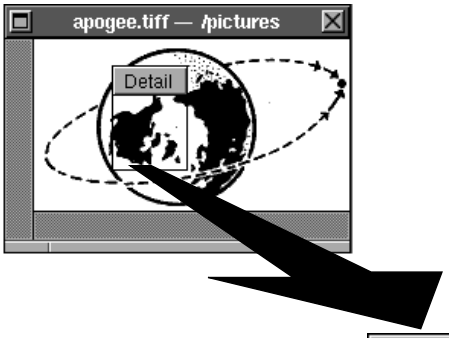


Figure 5 – Detail Tool

This tools is selected by choosing the "Tools → Detail" menu item. This tool will bring up a detail window showing a blown-up area of your icon and a detail frame overlaid the ori-ginal image, indicating which part of your image is showing up in the detail window. The detail window can be zoomed, unzoomed, and moved over the original image with the buttons at the top of the

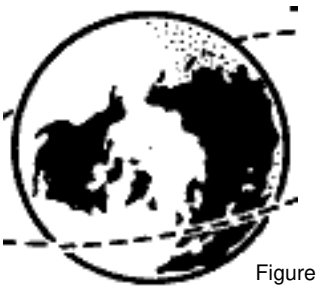
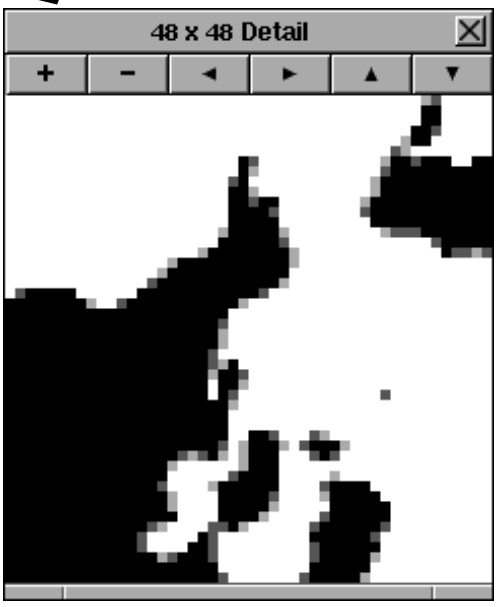


Figure 7

on and move the selection slightly to one side, exposing the image under-neath the selection. Click the mouse anywhere outside of the selection rec-tangle and it should disappear.

Editing the Image

Now bring up the Detail Window ("Tools → Detail"). Select the pencil tool from the Tool Panel and ensure that the current colour has 0 opacity (i.e. it's transparent) in the Colour Panel. You can now edit out the dashed lines around and over the planet in the Detail Window. Remember that you can move the Detail Window over the image by clicking on the arrows at the top of the Detail Window. To restore the crust of the planet where the dashed lines inter-sected it, select black with an opacity of 100 in the Colour Panel. See figure 8 for the completed image. A



word to the wise: save often while you are editing an image! Icon loves to crash just when you've finished some tricky editing and especially when you try to save your final image.

Scaling the Image

You will now need to shrink the image to a 48x48 pixel image, the stan-dard size for icons in the Workspace. Select the entire image using "Edit → Select All". Enable the coordinate dis-play in the Inspector Panel by clicking on the button labeled "Coordinates". Now click on the scaling button in the selection tool Inspector Panel. The cursor will change to an arrow-tipped cross. Click and drag with the rescaling cursor on one of the corners of the

Figure 8

selec-tion rectangle and drag the size of the selection rectangle to a 48x48 pixel. You should now see a miniature planet inside the selection rectangle superimposed over the original planet image. Feel free to crop away anything outside of the se-lection rectangle using the crop menu function ("Image → Crop"). You now have a 48x48 pixel planet icon which you should save by selecting the "Image → Save" menu item. Ensure that the transparency of the image will be retain-ed by making sure that the Alpha button is labelled "Alpha" and not "No Alpha" . *Warning*! Icon loves to crash at this point, so be prepared to redo some of your work. How much work depends on if you took my earlier advice serious-ly or not.

The resizing step is actually option-al in creating application icons since the Workspace will automatically scale any

image which you set as a directory icon or an application icon (using Interface Builder). However, you may want to create an icon of a particular size for an-other purpose and it is also useful to see how the rescaled image looks before it shows up in the Workspace. Most im-ages do not rescale very well and may need some additional touch-up after scaling.

Final Words

As I said before, Icon is rather complicated and has a lot of features, most of which I chose to ignore for this arti-cle, but it is possible to use it for both useful and straightforward image mani-pulation. For advice straight from the author of Icon, Keith Ohlfs, in designing nice looking icons, see his article, “Designing an Icon,” in the Winter '91 issue if *NeXTWORLD*. ◆

This Issue's Favorite Tip

The Hidden Improv Zombie

A particularly astute netnews-reader and Improv-user (or perhaps someone with a contact inside Lotus) informed “comp.sys .next.misc” readers of a trick to bring up a hidden treat in the Lotus Improv “Info” panel.

Open the Info panel from the main menu of Improv. While simultaneously holding down the Shift–Alternate–Command keys, click on the left side of the very generic looking Info Panel. Out of nowhere appears the gentleman pictured above.

So the question is – who is this ravishing beauty? Send your guess to us at “vnusnews @panik.questor.wimsey.bc.ca” and if we receive any especially clever response, we'll give the contributor a suitably wonderful and predictably inexpensive prize. Don't delay.

/usr/local

- Some members of the VNUS Executive travelled to Seattle recently to attend a meeting of the Puget Sound NeXT Users Group (PSNUG). This group is considerably smaller and, if the attendance at the meeting we were at is any indication, consists almost exclusively of programmers, with very few “user-only” types. Peggy Thompson of the Paget Press fame appears to be one of the more active forces in the group. One VNUS member remarked that the meeting reminded him of the early days of Vancouver's user group — a lot of programmers sitting around yacking about technical stuff. It was interesting to see the working of an-other NeXT user group and contrast their strengths and weaknesses with ours.

- The VNUS membership drive is proceeding well. Ten new members were added to the roster at the September general meeting alone. Some people have asked why members dues are being imposed at this stage, when there was never a need for them previ-ously. The reasons are many, including the need for funds to produce a quality newsletter, postage and communica-tions costs to keep in touch with a rapidly expanding membership, ad-ministrative supplies and the cost of our new meeting space at Science World. VNUS has grown from a small collective of people who needed very little in facilities and resources, to Canada's largest user group with ambitious plans to keep it's membership informed and active. The move to Science World should serve to increase our numbers even further.

- The September issue of the VNUS newsletter, featuring Bradley Head's article on Usenet News, has been by far the most successful and sought after issue to date. We made a conser-vative estimate and printed 250 copies only to discover that they wouldn’t come close to meeting the demand. This issue's run has been more than doubled, in anticipation of a contin-ued interest in the new format and it's content.

- The Doppler/Deep Cove BBS has add-ed a NeXT file and message section and placed VNUS member Robert Wong Jr. at the helm. Recent uploads include “BackSpace”, “Opener”, the late Robert Lin's “Tao”, and commu-nications program, “Pcomm”. It is encouraging to see the local BBS's taking an interest in NeXT, and creat-ing a secondary distribution channel for PD/shareware software for the many users without FTP access. The Doppler/Deep Cove BBS is one of Vancouver's largest and most active boards. The phone numbers are 277-9920, 277-9940 and 277-9960. For more information, contact Robert Wong Jr. or Doppler Computers.

- The SFU and UBC VNUS subgroups are alive and well. The last UBC meet-ing featured a demonstration of these NeXTdimension system and Mathematica 2.0. Interested parties at either location are encouraged to attend the informal and enlightening discussions and presentations. For SFU, contact Rory Gibson and at UBC refer inqui-ries to Bob Bajwa.

- VNUS is awaiting news of the 1991 Golden Nugget award winners. Every year NeXT Computers Inc. presents the most promising and active user groups with a variety of awards. VNUS completed an application and submitted it to Conrad Geiger, who serves as NeXT's liaison with the user groups. We are hopeful that we will, once again, win this prestigious award. We won last year's Golden Nugget for its local developer's camp and companion video tape.

- NeXT developer, Vancouverite and author of the *Tao* newsletter, Robert Lin died in an automobile accident at the end of the summer. Robert was well know in the Vancouver NeXT community, and his loss deeply saddens us. The Winter 91 issue of *NeXT-WORLD* featured reports from user groups around the world. Canada was represented by a contribution from Robert Lin. Regrettably, Robert never saw the article in print.

- VNUS has a new executive member. Grant Sinitsin works as a treasurer for a mining company and will be in charge of the VNUS finances.

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Acknowledgments

The production staff is grateful to the companies, organizations, and individuals who have contributed their services and/or resources to bring this newsletter to its readership. Without their help and expertise, we would be unable to fulfil our ambitions. We have chosen these sponsors carefully for their service, quality, and interest in and dedication to the NeXT platform. We hope that you will patronize them and express your thanks for their support.

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