

Comment

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A Newsletter for CompuServe Associates

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For Inquiring Minds Only: New Inquiry Brochure Hits the Mail



The new Inquiry Brochure: Taking a more human approach.

A computer buff sees a CompuServe commercial while watching *Nightwatch* on CBS. He's urged to call an 800 number for more information. He picks up the phone and dials.

At the same moment, a Macintosh enthusiast flips through *Macworld* magazine and is stopped by a CompuServe ad for Macintosh forums. She, also, is intrigued and calls the 800 number at the bottom of the ad.

It's now CompuServe's job to convince these computer users that the Information Service is what they need or what they want. To this end, nearly all prospective members receive a brochure that tells the CompuServe Information Service story, i.e. CompuServe's most comprehensive advertisement in brochure form, commonly referred to as the Inquiry Brochure.

CompuServe's latest Inquiry Brochure, the vehicle by which the uninitiated are introduced to the Information Service, gives readers a sense of not just what is online, but who is online. Unlike past brochures that were applications-oriented, this brochure features Information Service members' testimonials of product areas they favor.

And also unlike past brochures that contained product names and descriptions, the new Inquiry Brochure concentrates on member benefits only, with a sparse listing of available products and services.

Members featured in the brochure are representative of the new cross-section of cultures that make up

Information Service membership. Those cultures range from a single mother with a doctoral degree in labor relations who keeps news "clipping" folders to a college student who lives in such a remote area of Oklahoma that the only place he can buy software is The Electronic Mall®.

Following are brief sketches of four of the 12 members who appear in the brochure:

Sally Ryce, director of finance at Northwestern University's Medical School: "I find CompuServe to be a community of users really willing to help each other," says Ryce. A member of several personal computing forums, Sally is continually surprised — and pleased — when she posts a message about a program in a forum and finds the program's author online, helping.

Herb Bethoney, photographer for Boston's *PC Magazine*: An online investor, Bethoney uses S&P Online to stay up-to-date on market trends and happenings. "One company I invest in merged with another," says Bethoney. "I didn't receive anything about it in the mail, and wouldn't have until weeks later. I went to S&P Online and got all the information I needed right away."

David and James Babb, a father and son team: David is an attorney in a Chicago law firm; James is a doctoral studies student in New York. This duo saves on

long-distance telephone charges by communicating through EasyPlex. Says David Babb: "I bought my son in New York a CompuServe package and a modem, and we often keep in touch that way. It's nice to be able to send messages or share files when we need to."

Douglas Banker of Ann Arbor, Mich., Ted Nugent's business manager: An avid *MegaWars* player, Banker was immediately attracted to the idea of playing a space war game against other people — without knowing exactly who he was playing against. "It appealed to my competitive instincts," says Banker. "When you go one-on-one with another player, there's only one ship left when the dust settles."

The process of gathering all 12 CompuServe members together in order to take the portrait-style photographs for the brochure was, to say the least, a recurring challenge.

"The photo shoot, which required one photographer, one set and the presence of all 12 members in the same place at the same time, was a tremendous task," says Jerry Loffman, manager of advertising and promotion.

Because of the participants' work schedules, the photo shoot had to take place on a weekend during which everyone could make it: Saturday, July 16, 1988. The participants arrived on Friday night.

"We transformed the Fitness Center's gym into a photo studio," Jerry says. "We began shooting Friday night, warming up the set and cameras with Guruka (a physics engineer and yoga instructor who is active in lifestyle forums) and Sally." With two shots complete, Saturday's schedule was still formidable but at least manageable. Starting at 8 a.m., there were eight more individual sittings, at approximately one hour each, and the group photo to complete. (A group shot alone can take an entire afternoon, depending on the subjects.)

"With the help of an excellent photographer and patient, even pleasant, subjects,

Saturday's shoot went smoothly," Jerry says. "We pushed through the day and finished with the group photo by 6 p.m."

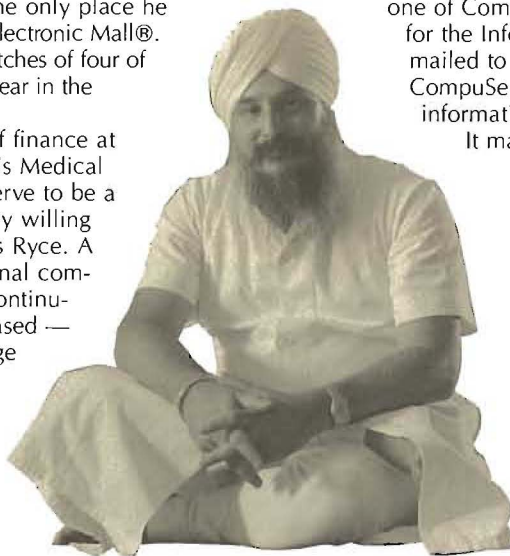
Included in free OEM subscription packages and direct-mail campaigns, the Inquiry Brochure is one of CompuServe's top promotional tools for the Information Service. The brochure is mailed to everyone who contacts CompuServe's Telemarketing group for more information about the Information Service.

It may be sent alone but is most often packaged in an "Inquiry Kit" with other materials, such as a Personal Computing Forums brochure.

The change in the creative approach to the Inquiry Brochure represents a shift in the overall marketing at CompuServe. In the early and mid-1980s,

CompuServe's advertising tended to position the Information Service as somewhat futuristic and technically-oriented. "Early CompuServe subscribers, and the

people who may still represent the core of our subscriber-base, tend to be fairly 'technical' in their interests and abilities and want all of the details regarding products and services online," Jerry says.



Kalsa: Interacting with members.



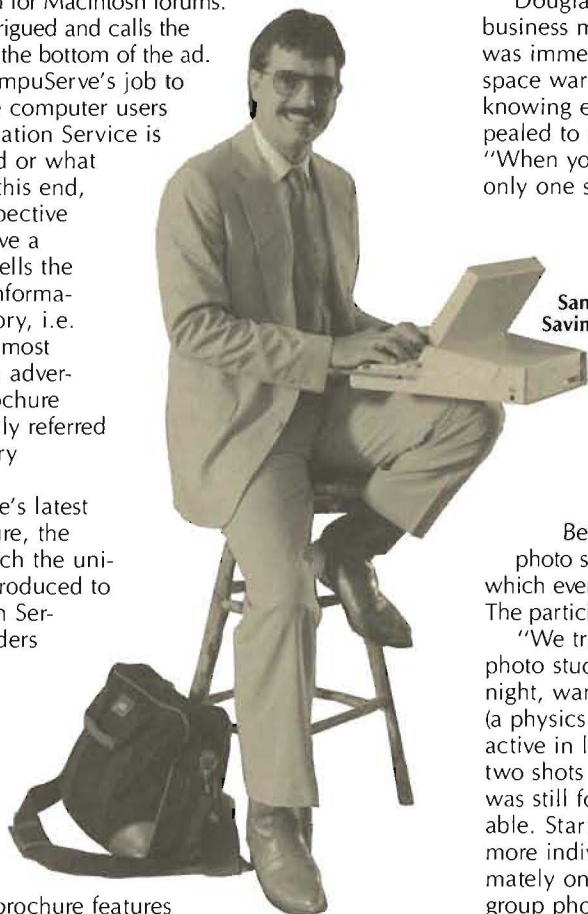
Smooth shooting: Capturing personalities on film.

"Today, our market extends to a larger group of consumers that are less willing to invest in a new technology and who are reluctant to read details about the service. New subscribers are interested in who else has tried CompuServe, who is online and what they get out of the service." Thus, the new Inquiry Brochure, along with much of CompuServe's marketing communications tools, takes a much more human, much more benefits-oriented approach.

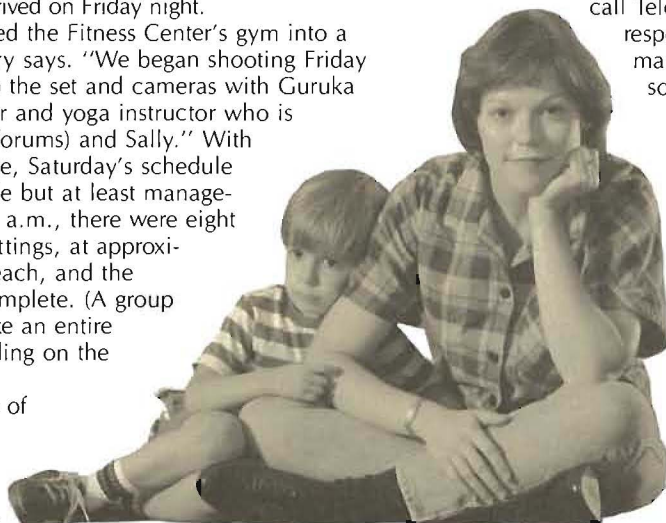
The Inquiry brochure is designed to acquaint this new market of potential subscribers with information about the Information Service. Its goal is to sell CompuServe Subscription Kits. Looking through the brochure, readers will find a heavy emphasis on what CompuServe can do for each specific individual, instead of long lists of services, products, and their applications.

Today, the new Inquiry Brochure is being tested against the old brochure. Some people who call Telemarketing Sales and Inquiry in response to advertisements or direct mail will receive the old brochure, some the new brochure. Over the next few months, the Market Research group will measure the sales and usage of each group. The brochure that sells the most subscriptions will be the most effective — and the one that continues to go to print.

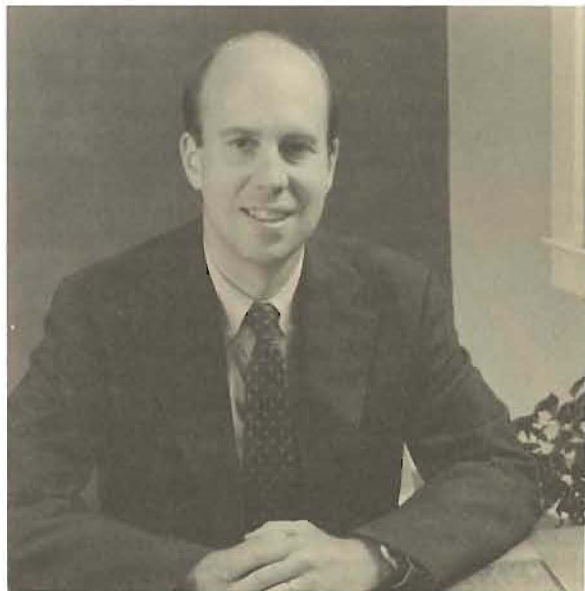
—Mary Ellen Stone and Kirk Donnan



Sanderson: Saving money.



Spencer: Getting informed.



Carl Nelson: Guiding fast-growing Access.

Introducing Access Technology

With the acquisition of Access Technology, CompuServe has become a major player in the software marketplace. CompuServe can enter new markets with Access' well-known spreadsheet product, 20/20™, along with its own database management and financial/human resources applications software.

Access, which employs 215 associates and is based in Natick, Mass., develops, markets and supports spreadsheet modeling software for use on a variety of computer systems. The firm has licensed more than 30,000 copies of its principal product, 20/20, which is marketed through Access' domestic and international sales force and third-party re-marketers.

"We have experienced a fast rate of growth," says Carl Nelson, Access, president and chief executive officer. "With nearly 50 percent of the market, Access is the industry leader for spreadsheet software packages in the DEC (Digital Equipment Corp.) and Unix-based marketplace. The merger with CompuServe provides us with an avenue for further growth."

Access' growth was spurred by 20/20, the only widely available spreadsheet that runs in the same form on mini, micro and mainframe computers, including DEC, Prime, Data General, Wang, IBM Unix and Hewlett-Packard (H-P). "Large organizations want consistency across computer systems," says Bob Massey, executive vice president of the Software Products Division. "And 20/20 allows a data processing executive to use the same software in multiple environments throughout the organization, giving greater control and consistency."

In addition, 20/20 interfaces with software office automation products, such as DEC's All-IN-1 and Data General's CEO, has potent graphic capabilities and interfaces with database management products, such as INGRES™, Oracle® and soon CompuServe's System 1032®. "The database connection is important because 20/20 can integrate with industry leaders," Bob says.

CompuServe plans to take advantage of 20/20's integration capabilities. "The first thing we want to do is to integrate System 1032 (CompuServe Data Technologies database management software) with 20/20," Bob says. "The other logical step is to integrate Collier-Jackson's applications software products with 20/20. Our 400 H-P installations that use Collier-Jackson software are key prospects for 20/20's H-P version."

"Once our products are integrated with 20/20, it will be easy for customers to retrieve information from a database, pass that data into a 20/20 spreadsheet and then graphically display that data. I hope we can fully integrate our products by summer."

There is the potential to expand the software product offerings to CompuServe's commercial customers, such as linking 20/20 into Wall Street's financial database access. Product integration also will enable CompuServe's customers to deal with a single vendor. "Companies like to deal with one vendor that is committed to them. Owens-Corning Fiberglas, for example, deals with us for network service, Interchange and software products."

Other plans include supplementing Access' U.S.-based telemarketers with CompuServe's Software Products Division sales associates and having Access' 25-member European direct sales force sell System 1032. Europe accounts for 40 percent of Access' revenue. "We are growing at a rate in excess of 50 percent compounded annually in the European market," Carl says.

With Access' attributes, it is obvious why CompuServe acquired it. "Access is highly respected within the industry and by its customers," Bob says. "It has an outstanding management team. Likewise, 20/20 is the leading spreadsheet product in the departmental computing environment." It has won the Digital Review Target award as the outstanding spreadsheet product for the DEC computer environment for four consecutive years. "Access has an excellent reputation in relationship with DEC, which is important to software companies that want to be successful in the VAX environment. We expect Access' reputation will help the Software Products Division."

The company's reputation for excellence is reflected in 20/20's packaging and marketing. "Customers receive an evaluation kit on disk or tape accompanied by an evaluation booklet," Bob says. "It makes the product fun as well as easy to use."

Access also is profitable. "It has good margins and that is important to CompuServe. Its culture is consistent with CompuServe's. There are several good fits."

While CompuServe is now a major player in the software market, it has no intention of resting on its laurels. "CompuServe continually looks for products or applications that could complement its existing base of products," Bob says. "System utilities software is one area we could explore that would complement and supplement the things we do today. Another hot area is graphics."

Bob believes CompuServe's relationship with Access will make it easier for CompuServe to attract strategic partners, develop strategic alliances and make additional acquisitions, increasing revenue and profit.

—Robert Loomis



20/20: The industry standard.

Health Corner

Dental X-rays Detect Hidden Problems



Dr. Dale R. Bauer

X-ray films of your teeth are a valuable diagnostic tool because they can detect hidden problems affecting your dental or general health.

An X-ray examination is essential for the early detection of diseases that can cause serious problems to your teeth, gums and supporting bones. X-rays can show early dental decay between teeth or under the gumline, bone loss, and teeth that are impacted, abscessed or erupting abnormally. Diseases and tumors of the jaw also can be detected.

Dental X-rays include bitewing, periapical and panoramic films. Bitewing X-rays show the crowns of

several upper and lower teeth on one small film. This X-ray identifies cavities between the teeth and is useful in the early detection of changes in bone caused by periodontal disease.

A periapical film, which shows the full length of a tooth and some supporting structure, indicates problems, such as impacted teeth, fractures, abscesses, cysts and tumors. Bone pattern characteristics in the film also can indicate certain medical conditions.

A full series, 14 to 21 films, is a combination of bitewing and periapical films, and shows all of the teeth, roots and related areas of the jaw. The number of films taken depends on many factors, including the size and shape of the mouth.

A panoramic X-ray shows the upper and lower teeth, a large portion of the jaw and other structures in one large film. This X-ray is most useful in finding unerupted or impacted teeth, cysts, retained root fragments, fractures and other jaw conditions.

With modern techniques and equipment, the amount of radiation received in a dental examination is small. The American Dental Association and government agencies have set standards for the proper, safe and effective use of dental X-rays. Improvements in today's low-dose X-ray equipment, including filters, collimation of X-ray beams, shielded cones, and precise timers, and the use of lead aprons and high-speed film, minimize unnecessary exposure and provide further protection from scatter radiation.

Periodically your dentist will ask you to have dental X-rays taken to aid in his or her diagnosis of your individual dental needs. The information gained from the X-ray films are essential to keep your teeth and mouth healthy for a lifetime.

Dr. Dale Bauer is a practicing dentist in Dublin, Ohio.

Do You Know?

- CompuServe had pretax earnings of \$7.3 million for the quarter ended Oct. 31, 1988, an increase of 11.7 percent from \$6.5 million for the same period last year. Revenue for the second quarter was \$42.5 million, up 21.5 percent from \$35 million last year.
- Access Technology has moved into a new three-story corporate center in Natick, Mass. The facility houses more than 200 associates with room for expansion.
- Mariah Liggett, Fitness Center manager, was featured in the "Athlete of the Week" article in the Wednesday, Dec. 21, 1988 *Columbus Dispatch's* Neighbor News section.
- In fiscal 1988, the total number of returns prepared nationwide in H&R Block company-owned and franchised offices was 10,487,000, representing an 8.5 percent increase over the 9,668,200 returns prepared in 1987.
- The Public Broadcasting Service considers the Collier-Jackson/Digital Equipment Corp. combination the best on the market. The PBS computer system includes a four-node VAX cluster (two VAX 8650s and two VAX 785s) and a MicroVAX II. PBS runs Collier-Jackson's financial and accounting programs on the VAXes.
- CompuServe Data Technologies' product development plans for 1989 include System 1032 products that connect with workstations and personal computers, and additional software technologies, including computer-aided software engineering and SQL (Structured Query Language).
- CompuServe announced EasyPlex in February 1985.
- Branch contracts:

The Boston branch signed a value-added data network contract with the Bank of New England.

The Newport Beach branch signed a BSD/ISD agreement with MAI Basic Four of Tustin, Calif.

The Washington, D.C., branch signed an Interchange contract with Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America Inc. and a value-added network contract with Allen Corp. of America.

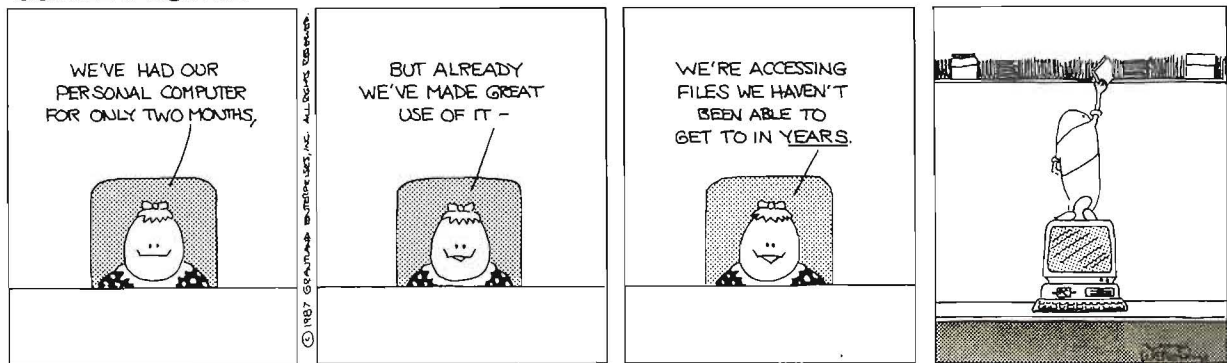
The San Francisco branch signed a value-added data network contract with Whole Earth of Sausalito, Calif.

The St. Louis branch signed a value-added data network contract with Argus Health Systems Inc. of Shawnee Mission, Kan.

Judge Lloyd C. Doll of San Jose issued the first warrant to search computer memory banks in a case of alleged theft of trade secrets from Information Systems Design on Feb. 19, 1971.

Best results from physical fitness workouts are made by exercising three times per week for 20 to 30 minutes continuously.

GRANTBAND®



Sales Associates Thrive in Remote Locations

Independent, entrepreneurial and isolated are words that describe sales representatives in Collier-Jackson and CompuServe Data Technologies' remote sales offices. "It's like being the Lone Ranger," says Gary Vigneau, Collier-Jackson's director of sales. "The advantage of being outside the day-to-day network is that it's easier to be successful," says Ken Chism, CompuServe Data Technologies' Western regional sales manager of the three-person Los Angeles office. "We just meet our sales quotas, and everyone's happy. We're simply more entrepreneurial." But the downside is that communications are difficult and more lengthy. "The only way I know what's going on is to nose around and write memos," Ken says.

"I can't imagine how I would get everything done if I was in corporate and available for interruptions daily," Deborah says.

In the remote outpost life, memos, reports and other documentation replace verbal comments and staff meetings. InfoPlex and the telephone become primary tools. "It's our challenge to make the remote office staff aware of what's going on," says Scott Thomas, CompuServe's Data Technologies' director of sales. Electronic mail is indispensable in overcoming the limitations of distance, according to Scott.

The main benefits that remote salespeople offer the

company are a higher level of contact with clients, which enhances relationships, and travel expenses are greatly reduced. Scott says "Therefore, it is critical that we maintain a close relationship with our clients."

Remote staff also do a lot of trade shows — that's a way not only to identify prospective clients but also to work with the sales staff from the home office. Any opportunity to combine resources can be a boon for the remote staff. "Being a relatively small player compared to the major competition, such as the Oracle® and INGRES™ environments, means we have to work smarter and hustle a bit more," Scott says. Personal contact also plays an important role in the advertising and public relations plan for the product line. There is also interaction with the Software Products Division sales force, based at CompuServe's corporate headquarters, who cultivate leads and eventually hand them over to the appropriate remote staff.

Deborah Cheney is a Minneapolis-based Collier-Jackson sales representative. Like most remote office staff members, she shares office space with a local CompuServe branch. "I do not have any dedicated support staff," says Deborah. "However, Kris Musson, the branch assistant, helps me out considerably." Covering Collier-Jackson's Midwest territory, Deborah promotes the company by making presentations to local sales representatives from Hewlett-Packard and Digital Equipment Corp. Her goal is to move into their sales cycles and to help provide solutions for their prospects. She describes that arrangement as a "win-win for all" situation.

For Collier-Jackson representatives such as Deborah, the Sales Information System, an automated management tool, and CompuServe's communication link are lifelines. The only negative aspect Deborah sees is

the lack of face-to-face contact with technical experts. "I would rather do brainstorming sessions in person," she says. Yet she thrives on being in front of prospects. "I can't imagine how I would get everything done if I was in corporate and available for interruptions daily," Deborah says.

We just meet our sales quotas, and everyone's happy. We're simply more entrepreneurial," Ken says.

Having the remote offices lends credibility to the claim that Collier-Jackson has a national reputation, according to Deborah. And remote offices are dynamic. "We're always changing size," Gary says. "The CompuServe Data Technologies and Collier-Jackson offices in Southern California have consolidated in a new location in Santa Ana. Our goal is to consolidate remote locations into a single office whenever it makes sense. Access Technology plans to use the Southern California office for customer training seminars."

Gary sees the advantage of having local people serve local clients, especially when they still can have support from headquarters' technical staffs.

—Yvonne Heather Burry

Department Profile

Underlying Bedrock: Videotex Technology

The foundation of the CompuServe Information Service is built on software developed and maintained by the Videotex Technology department. And much of the Information Service also is based on tools developed by the department.

"The department is responsible for developing the easy-to-use, consistent interface between the subscriber and the system," says Brion Jones, manager of videotex technology.

The department's roots can be traced back about eight years. A plaque in Brion's office credits Brion, Ty Wait, and Bob Spengola for helping found the Information Service. Among other things, this team developed the software for the first electronic newspaper and helped establish CompuServe as the premier videotex provider in the United States.

When Ty left CompuServe, the development of videotex technology became part of the Information Technology department under John Wyckoff. Then, in 1985, videotex and forum development split off as the Videotex Technology department was established.

The department consists of 10 associates loosely divided into three groups: Interchange Technology, Forum Technology and BSD/ISD support. It is not unusual for boundaries to cross as the need arises.

Interchange Technology, which is responsible for the menu software that is central to the Information Service, includes Terrence Payne, lead analyst, and Peggy Conroy and Tracy Higgins, systems programmer/analysts. "The Interchange software provides the menu system that allows users to navigate through the vast Information Service database to locate individual products," Brion says. "It also is a textual database system containing product news and information accessible via menus or, in some cases, via keyword searching."

Besides what subscribers see, a lot goes on behind the scenes to build, update and link the Information Service's wealth of information. "We support the database structure by providing the tools to create it, maintain it and display it," says Peggy. The group works with Information Services Division support, Advanced Media and Business Services Division support to meet the ever-changing needs of the evolving Information Service industry.

The Forum Technology group includes Lynn Wu, Jerry Drobnick and Marc Rayburn, systems programmer/analysts. These associates provide the development, maintenance and support for the forum software, public access and private access.

Forums represent a large portion of the Information Service usage. Therefore, the group spends a good deal of time listening to focus groups, working with the forum administrators and working with Forum Support to strengthen the forum product. Most things the group does comes from requests and feedback from the forum administrators and users. Recent improvements to the forum menus are representative of this group's effort.

The BSD/ISD support group is charged with providing support to the Business Services and Information



Videotex Technology, seated from left, Brion Jones, Tracy Higgins and Jerry Drobnick, and rear, from left, Lynn Wu, Peggy Conroy, Marc Rayburn, John Huston and Colleen Green: Supporting the Information Service.

Services divisions in the use of and the development of videotex products. It assists in the use of Interchange products and occasionally writes custom applications. The group includes Duane White, systems programmer/analyst; Colleen Green, systems analyst; and John Huston, department assistant. Much of this group's efforts involve supporting VIDLIB, the Infokey software and The Electronic Mall.®

Besides what subscribers see, a lot goes on behind the scenes to build, update and link the Information Service's wealth of information.

VIDLIB is a library that provides the consistent interface in applications developed for the Information Service. It provides the same look and feel as the Interchange software, allowing applications to be built such that the presentation of menus, articles and prompts are consistent. The library also automatically provides support for the Information Service's navigational commands.

Support requests are by no means limited to VIDLIB. "If anyone has a question on the videotex software, they come to us," says Colleen. In addition, the group is responsible for a number of applications, including the INDEX program, the National Bulletin Board software and The Electronic Mall order-entry software. The group also develops and maintains software that tracks and monitors Information Service usage.

Overall, the group has many diverse contacts

throughout the company as a result of its charter to assist in the development of videotex products.

The department is heavily involved in the development of the host/micro technology that will allow a "microcomputer's intelligence" to be used in providing more advanced and elegant interfaces between the user and the Information Service. All three groups have been involved in the development and documentation of this technology. Along the way, a support library was developed by the Forum Technology group that now is used by all CompuServe host products involved in implementing the host/micro technology.

Another major project under way is the addition of full-text search capabilities to the Interchange software. It will use the B-text full-text search library developed by the Languages and Tools department.

All three groups have major renovation projects planned to update the underlying tools and software to prepare CompuServe's Information Service technology for the future. "There are always enhancements, but an enhancement to one part of the system is an enhancement to all," Peggy says.

The workings of the system may be taken for granted, but as Colleen points out, a user "can't get to anything in our system without going through Interchange software." And for that, you can thank Videotex Technology.

—Christine Graves

Associate Profile

Network Cartoonist Makes Teaching Fun

Pass by one of John Borusheski's network operations training classes and you will observe a phenomenon not usually associated with deciphering the intricacies of nanonodes and protocols.

The audience will have had to digest the enormous amounts of information needed to make informed sales presentations to prospective clients. They may be tired and perhaps a little overwhelmed. They will also be laughing, thanks to John's unique way of presenting his material.

With pen or chalk in hand, John turns nanonodes into little people who love to make trouble or terminals who reach out and strangle the operator under the guise of being "user friendly." "Making visual puns out of network jargon comes naturally," says John. "I borrow from several cartooning styles and doodle constantly. It helps keep everyone awake during long seminars."

John, network technical specialist, gives training seminars for account representatives and executives on network operations before sales are made. He also makes presentations to prospective clients. After the sale, he helps set up the system at the client site and provides technical support.

Supplementing his training classes and client presentations with humorous drawings was a natural step for John. "I worked through college as a professional illustrator, and I've had drawings published," he says. "I had a heavy science and math concentration, too — I was interested in computers."

While John says he's been drawing all of his life, his network cartoons grew out of his doodling during training classes he attended as a new associate. "I'd draw things and pass them around like a naughty schoolboy," John says. "I made fun of everything, and it helped jog my memory. I use the same ideas when I teach. I also spend as much time or more learning as I do teaching." He produces new drawings each time he learns something new. John spends even more time in the field working with clients. "Clients enjoy the



This is the proper way to hold an asynch cable. Although many bytes have been recorded rarely are they terminal.

cartoons as much as the network people do, and they can be a good marketing tool," he says. "A little levity helps in any situation, and the cartoons may jog their memories later.

"I do cartoons to augment my presentations because the nature of the subject matter is somewhat dry. It's easy to make fun of terms like 'garbled yoyo data.'" Since many of his listeners are not network technicians, they tend to take such unfamiliar terms and apply the most literal meaning to them. John's drawings reinforce that while leading them through the network processes they must learn and remember.

However, this is not a deliberate process, but rather an instinctive reaction. John says drawing is almost

like therapy for him. "It's easy to take these nonsensical-sounding things and give them a character," he says. "I gave the nanonodes a character because they have a funny name."

Although John has no plans to get his network-oriented drawings published, his cartoons have become immensely popular with account representatives and network specialists company-wide. "Most of the account representatives expect it now," John says. "When I teach a class, they want to see what I've drawn since the last time, or they'll ask me to draw something new."

"I borrow from several cartooning styles and doodle constantly. It helps keep everyone awake during long seminars," John says.

"Drawing is impulsive for me. I enjoy doing it, making people laugh about it. Most of my drawings are oriented to network/marketing situations, so some people might need explanations for them."

In fact, John's cartoons travel to interested associates in various parts of the company through a different kind of 'network.' "I usually leave my drawings with someone and they end up on a lot of bulletin boards," John says. One such person is Bill Flynn, supervisor of certification and testing, who regularly posts John's cartoons in the network lab in Building One. The cartoons are passed along in this manner until most network associates have seen them. "We like to share [the drawings] at corporate," Bill says. "Those that are just John's doodles on yellow paper, we copy and hang in our offices. We send the nice ones out to be mounted and hang them up on the walls to lighten things up."

"When people see them, they usually ask, 'Hey, does he have any more of these? When are they coming?' People do bug us for them. They're popular."

Of drawing for his fellow associates, John says, "It's something that I can't turn off. I keep thinking of funny scenes. The busy schedule I maintain has almost forced me to give up more involved art forms that take a lot of time. The cartoon is an immediate form of gratification."

On dealing with technical terms, John says, "It's better to draw cartoons than to draw confused stares from the audience."

—Gayle Brown

Associate Relations

Executive Interviews: An Equal Exchange



Donna Zimmerman,
Manager,
Human Relations

More than 650 interviews later, the executive interview program, which began in 1984, is an integral part of CompuServe's culture. The program enables the executive management team to interact with associates one-on-one.

"The program is an important way for me to stay in touch with how people feel about the company and to impart perspective," says Maury Cox, executive vice president of the Information Services Division. "Often, associates develop opinions from fragmented pieces of information. Executive interviews give me a chance to hear those opinions, and occasionally I can fill in the missing pieces that provide increased insight."

"It also is difficult for most associates to appreciate the importance of their role in the company and how they can help achieve business objectives. I get a lot

of satisfaction from helping someone understand how he or she makes a difference. Executive interviews also provide an opportunity for listening to ideas and showing concern for associates and customers."

From the interviewee's perspective, the interview provides a chance to chat with an executive he or she may not have an opportunity to interact with.

Denny Jenkins, applications analyst, believes that his interview with Barry Berkov, senior vice president of business support and development, enabled him to obtain a perspective on several matters that he may never have pursued. "It made a difference to hear Barry's candid explanation of a business decision and a response to an idea that I had submitted to him," says Denny. "I had interpreted things differently. Our talk 'lightened the load' and lifted negative feelings."

"I was apprehensive about meeting with Barry because I have few occasions to talk one-on-one with him. He made me feel comfortable, and I felt he wanted to hear my opinions. I felt I could be candid."

Sandi Karnes, executive secretary, says the program gives associates the opportunity to provide positive and negative feedback on key issues without jeopardizing their positions. "The benefit is not only to the associate but also to the company, because it strengthens communications and provides input on possible ways to improve morale," says Sandi. "It reinforces CompuServe's philosophy that associates are important."

The program has become increasingly flexible through the years due to feedback from associates and top management. Interviews are scheduled intra- and interdepartmentally. Associates, such as Denny, find that interviewing with the vice president of his area is an advantage. "In my case, another vice president probably would not have known enough about my work or our area to provide the kind of insight I obtained," Denny says.

Other associates prefer to interview with an executive from other departments to learn more about other areas of the company or because they feel more comfortable being candid with someone not in the direct chain of command.

Some associates have wondered what happens to the information obtained from the interviews. Denny believes that while one individual's opinions or suggestions may not be reason enough to implement or change a procedure, the information gathered through interview programs and focus groups certainly influences change. "I believe that feedback from associates facilitated the changes to Spotlight and incentive plans," he says.

The more than 650 interviews represent an investment of nearly 3,000 hours by the executive team and associates. Associates are encouraged to participate in the interviews as scheduled. It is important that the exchange of information be candid to benefit both parties.

Lending a Hand

During the United Way campaign Jean Miller set aside her career as an employment manager to become a loaned executive to United Way.

For three months, Jean spent time and energy communicating the United Way's goals and philosophies to the business community. She assisted in setting up organized campaigns with corporations throughout Franklin County.

Jean was one of 55 loaned executives. With her support and that of others throughout the community, the United Way reached its goal of \$28,185,000.

CompuServe will support the loaned executive program next year. If you would like more information about the program or would like to be considered for the program, contact Jean or Judy Reinhard, vice president of human resources.

Campaign Tops Goal

Associates supported the 1988 United Way campaign with a record \$106,552 in pledges — a 10 percent increase over last year's total. The campaign's kickoff netted \$4,566 — a 380 percent increase over last year's kickoff.

In addition, 69 percent of the corporate-based associates participated in the 1988 campaign.

About 80 associates served as volunteers in the winning campaign effort. Francine Ashe, manager of credit and collections; Bill McKinley, Electronic Mall account executive; and Tom Stumbaugh, network planning analyst, served as campaign co-chairpersons. In addition, Cindy Haller, human resources assistant, served as a special assistant.

Comment

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In Next Month's Issue

- Supplementing Network Technical Specialists.
- Branch assistants keep sales offices functioning.
- *Communication Solutions* opens doors for sales associates.