FROBNICATE

ESSENTIAL FOR ALL THOSE ACORN TECHIE-TYPES OUT THERE...

- OS PATCHES
- ACORN IN THE FUTURE?
- SUMMER FUN

Hissing Sprouch
Summer 1996 Issue 8 £0

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EDITORS PAGE part one

Welcome to part one of the Editors pages. Why two parts? That is easy to answer. Part two includes a whole load of 'spoilers' as to how things were created in the making of this issue of Frobnicate.

Well, this will be the final Frobnicate. Yeah, yeah, you've heard that from issue 3. But this time I mean it. More details on this in issue 9...

One the newsgroup "csa.advocacy", there is a whole debate raging over who has the better mouse. Is it a Mac with its mentally insulting one-button mouse of an Acorn with its sophisticated and integrated three-button mouse? No guesses for my own personal reference.

Whilst we are talking about that 'net, I think this is a good a time as any to point out that a simplified version of Frobnicate – much smaller and less bells&whistles – will be created in HTML script. I may also include some JAVA extensions? However I am anti–proprietary so if anybody has any neat ways to mess up a program called "NetScape" whilst not affecting other HTML viewers, please contact me!

You didn't notice the fax subliminal bit regarding mouse buttons? No? Good. Hehehe...

It has come time to reflect on life. Quarter of a year has passed since Christmas yet it seems only yesterday. I could carry on pointing out important events through history – but you get the idea. People have stopped prophesising fancy things for the turn of the century. There will be no Mars landing. It takes eight years to fly to Mars with our technology. Go figure... In the FROBNICATE echo (Fidonet), Joseph Kelleher reckons we should keep life "simple and intuitive" and celebrate the turn of the century on the year 2000 (which, I must admit, does make some sense) instead of being "technically correct for reasons everybody knows about and nobody cares about" and celebrate on 2001. Me? Heck, I support the 2001 option but not so strongly as to not join in the party at 00:00h 1st Jan 2000. :-)

Quite a number of things happening in the FROBNICATE echo. I made a suggestion that it should be named the "intellectual off-topic" echo. Few discussions around Frobnicate magazine, but plenty on alsorts. Feel free to join in. It is backboned as far as I'm aware and, well, I'm your moderator. 'nuff said.

This issue sees the conclusion of that nice little hacker story. Now you didn't believe it did you? No? Good! I suppose it makes a good read. What would you prefer, source codes or interesting fiction?

In the ACORN–BBSDOORS echo, I listed all of my main software (some 40 items, plus a few I probably forgot) and invited all–out slag–offs to be sent to me by netmail or email. I'm getting fed up of receiving garbled bug reports months after something is released, so I'm asking for bug reports and comments galore. Then I can get around to fixing a few!

<silence>

Sad isn't it? So if any readers have ***any*** comments about BudgieSoft software... do contact me. Your input is vital.

See you in a few pages time!


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23rd April 1996 at 01:28h.

Diary of a hacker

To continue this (fictional?) story... Editors comments in Homerton font (like this). All recognisable companies and passwords etc edited slightly – just in case. :-)

Part two...

This is conclusion in the series about my adventures as a Hacker. The events in these text files are very real. They are written as they occurred. All people in this have had their Handles changed, (unless otherwise specified).

—To continue where I left off...

I sent Dr.Antristo home after our "encounter" with I¤M. I loved the fact I had entered one of the biggest Corps in the World! It was about 3:34 in the morning, I logged onto the Lunacy in the Abyss BBS, and went into the chat with my peers. After talking to them at length about my "Discoveries", I found them all asking me for the Passwords, and how I managed to get that far. I told them that only an *EXPERIENCED* hacker could do such things... I will admit, I was up on myself. (shame) These others, all 13 of them, were in **awe**. For once I was in the lead, I was able to scoff at some of the higher ups who had told me I would never achieve what they had. I may not have been as good as they were, but I was up with them in the big leagues! Potempkin, Renwôar, Übermahn, The Drifter, Sewer Rat, and Thycho, a few names of those who were online at the time. They were all very interested in acquiring info on what I had gotten into. I wanted to tell them, but I thought it best not to. Not yet..... After chatting for half the evening, I finally went to sleep, wondering what my next move should be.

October 30th, 1988

Dr.Antristo and I went bin shopping again. We dug up a record of ex–employees scheduled to have their passwords cleared from the system [how convenient!]. Someone loved us, to give us this trash. We returned home to find passwords, doodling, more Loop Numbers, and an old records collection of New In–Service Numbers. We wanted to know how A§&T worked, so we were going to check it out. I first needed to talk to my friend/contact in Ohio. I dialled up his number in the 216 area and waited to chat with him. He wasn't online. Bummer. I checked a few of the other BBS's in the general area looking for people who could tell me how one was able to crack into A§&T. No one seemed to know. On the following evening we finally got our big break. Another hacker, told us in exchange for Loop Numbers he would give us a password in the A§&T system. We agreed. He gave us the password to a smaller area of A§&T and told us that it was pretty unguarded so we should have no problem finding what we wanted to look at. I was and very much still am an Astronomy Buff. I wanted to find out how many A§&T Satellites were up there. So Dr.Antristo & I were going to find out the following night.

Happy Halloween.....<Evil Grin>

On November 1st, 1988 we called A§&T. We were buzzed off of the 24pack of Jolt we had imbibed. After connection to the Loop number we dialled into the Corporate office of A§&T and were actually given a command prompt, (after a colourful ASCII Screen...Yeah...Right.) The A§&T Logo was proudly displayed onto our monitor, but we thought, with their apparent lack of security, that Pride was False. We typed in the password and it told us that it required a name for "Security" reasons. We dug up a name and fed it into the computer. After verification of that employee, (NEVER put your full name on stationary!) it gave us access into the system. I thumbed through some small records and such. Nothing much to get in the way of records, or options. I decided to look into the system a bit further. After nosing through some menus, I found a "doorway" to the larger system. The way A§&T was, it was a bunch of smaller computers all hooked into one another by a bigger system. I was merely in one of the smaller appendages. I wanted the big guy! I opened the door and was system transferred to a larger net, where it showed scheduled payrolls, pink slip notices, active staff members, and a monstrofic listing of people who were behind on their payments. Jackpot! Or so I thought. No where could I find anything on A§&T Satellites, or the such. I couldn't fix any of the payrolls or even reprieve people from getting the ever-more-noticable pink slip. (I still think American Companies are penny pinchers for looking elsewhere for their SLAVE LABOUR) I sat there looking through the people lists, looking for a higher up so I could "borrow" his name...heh heh. I couldn't locate the main file area for any of the larger ups', so I logged off for the evening. I would find out later. The Doc had an idea that would require skilful planning and cunning. I counted myself in. So

there we were at 3:35 the next day, standing on a corner, on a pay phone, talking to the operator. We told the nice lady we were late for an appointment with director of operations and that we needed to reschedule our time, and after several minutes of chatting with the nice lady, I told her I was putting his name down in my appointment book, and I needed it spelled correctly, so she and I went through the spelling of the director of ops. :) I laughed as we wrote it down, little would this girl know what were up to! After chatting for a few minutes, I disconnected and Dr.Antristo and I went home. [and began to sign away the movie rights for this piece :-)] We began to talk about how we were going to get in, as well as what we would do when we had access. He didn't know and neither did I. I guessed we'd have to figure it out when we got there. School homework was completed on time, (I STILL think that its a waste) and we both had dinner with our respective in–mates. (what would you call a family that no longer cared?) Evening rolled around, we were both a bit tired, so we were going to make this quick...We dialled into the Loop Number and then into the little number our hacker buddy gave us. After we were in, I opened the doorway and entered the main area. After scanning the place for new info, I used the fellows name and opened myself to a world of new possibilities. I found myself able to rearrange small lists of people, reverse pink slips, etc... I was in! I checked out some of those pink slips and read up. I was horrified to find that some of these people were being canned because they were in their 40's?!? I looked for who was responsible for signing these slips, and to my utter amazement it was the guy who I was impersonating! Well, I, being the better part of this guys conscience, decided to fix what I broke! I reversed several of the pink slips and gave one to this bastard! (Someone out there owes me there job! :)) After dawdling with the pink slips, I went to check out other areas of the company. I managed to worm my way into the special sections, like who could order what. Private lines for other companies, Tracing Codes, and satellites. I couldn't access the satellites, but I managed to print screen the private phone lines of other companies, (and I STILL have them) and I found a real cute doorway...it was to emergency areas. Example, A master program for the termination of the Chicagoland area. I liked that. I could axe communications on 3.2 million people in a microsecond. hahaha! I didn't, of course. I went ahead and logged out. I felt very good about the things I had done. If there is a God, he must have been thinking about that moment. I know that most people out there who are hackers or want to hack, I know it is hard to believe, but should you ever be in the position I am, you'd understand why I did what I did. I never asked for forgiveness, as a matter of fact, I don't want it. I was aware of what I was doing, and I enjoyed it. Anyways...Dr.Antristo had told me that the Department of Defence was offering contracts to F§rmi Labs, and to A§gonne on the Star Wars Space Project, and that we should look into it. I liked that idea, but the government? Geez... I thought about it for all of a month. In that time I hacked a large number of places, M§crosoft, I§M (again), S§ars, T§xaco, I§linois Bell, W§sconsin Bell, P§udental, my high school, (Everyone has done it, admit it), Martin M§rrettia, and J§t Propulsion Laboratories, (if you don't know what the last 2 are, STOP READING!) I had enough stuff that if I sold half of it, I could retire at the ripe age of 16! But even thought our government holds out on us, and lies, steals, and keeps secrets, I still love it. This is the land of the free.....NOT!!!

December 3rd, 1988

I was at home watching some christmas shopping commercials and drinking a Jolt, when I received a phone call from my buddy Dr.Antristo. He told me that A§gonne had gotten the project and that someone I knew was the project manager. The password was A§ti-RX...?!? I sighed and said what the hell, why not. Lets see what our wonderful government is up to now. After a little bit of looking into it, I found out that yes indeed someone I knew was into the project. I also found out that as of 1988-89 Star Wars was not...35% complete, but a whopping 87%. The only thing left to "shunt" into orbit was a weapon called the Wiggler beam. A laser which concentrated high speed X-rays into a focused stream, resulting in a laser so powerful it would literally slice incoming missiles in half. I didn't care what the thing could do, this was good information. I liked it, so I got onto A§gonne National Laboratories Cray computer using a stolen password and copied the plans to an undisclosed location for later retrieval. Dr.Antristo told me to go to the Department of Energy, you know, the bigwigs with no dicks, who push everyone whom they consider beneath them around to make their things for them. (Wussies) I went from the Cray to the main computer terminal of the D.O.E. and looked around for a bit. I found something I know all you will just love, a small article of information indicating after shipping out 265 "pink slips" that Article 130a, said that they (all the brass at the D.O.E. were going to give themselves some raises) oh my, how cute. Well, after looking around in the D.O.E. area, I quickly shut off the computer and terminated the connection when I heard my all–powerful Father come down the stairs to talk to me. Whew!

Prologue: You know, after writing this series I witnessed something real bizarre. A large response. I wrote these text so that people would understand what it CAN be like for hackers, phreakers, etc... I am not saying what we do is right or good, but I write it so you understand. I wanted to take a moment to thank all the people who read this. If it was not for you, these would never have been written. At any rate, after much thought on the subject, I am here to offer you all a proposal of the continuance of this text. There are many things I have done in the world under the monitor. If the people reading this text wish it, I will continue to write these text. I know the SysOp of the Masquerade who has agreed to post these text on his BBS, wants me to, and if you do, I will. Anyone who wants me to continue, call the Masquerade and let the SysOp know. Since Thumper is planning on putting a NUP soon, if this does not get into circulation on time, when you get to the matrix prompt, (the logon screen for you rookies) just format the hard drive. I know, I know, but that's the only way you'll be able to apply. ;) Don't you just love the subliminal crap? So to all of you, I say thanks. And on with the last!

November 24th

Dr.Antristo was out of town with the inmates (family) to visit other relatives...(more inmates). So I had the computer to myself this weekend. After my little stint at A§gonne Natl. Lab, my father had come home and told me about it, he figured that since I was into computers, I'd like to know they were having a problem with theirs...namely a hacker. I laughed and told him they'd catch him eventually...(Yeah, right) and ate my dinner. Later in the evening, I juiced up the computer and dialled out to one of my more preferred pirate BBS's. I talked to a few of the others on its multi–node chat...(which in that time was considerably slower.) and we discussed matters of big importance...crashing the local school computers. Hmmm, I had no real input, seeing as I was a hacker, not a phreaker, but I added my two cents anyways. Then later (45Min) some of the other hackers came online and began to debate techniques on how to get into military computer systems. I laughed when I watched them type this all out. I was thinking to myself that that only happens in the movies..(for those of you who saw War Games, I know EVERYONE has seen it) but, I was wrong. These guys were insistent that there was a "backdoor" to a computer in the Department of Energy. I wasn't about to believe that on the grounds that I didn't believe in secret codes, or hidden back doors, or anything that made hacking look a little less than reality. After listening to a few guys plead their cases to the rest of us, I finally told them I would check it out. If only to shut these guys up. The others agreed. They asked me if I could gain access to the DOE central computer system. I told them of what I had done earlier in the month. They were awestruck. I asked the other, more reality planted hackers if these guys knew what COMPUTER really meant...this was the first time I had encountered the dreaded WaReZgEeK. It is something I never forgot.

I searched in a vain attempt to access the "backdoor" to this supposed military computer. I had not, nor have I ever found it to this day. After looking for almost an hour, the only thing I found was that my eyes were irritated. I dropped carrier and returned to the Pirate BBS. All of my colleagues were present for me to lecture these two little chucklef***s about lying. After a browbeating, they admitted that they made most of it up. The others began phreaking the houses of the two WaReZgEeKs.. (I believe its now called war-dialling, or something like that [yes, named after the "dial all numbers in this area" software depicted in WARgames the movie...]) I have no clue how they found out who they really were, but they must have been better than me. I talked to the others for a while, discussing the two chaps and wondering if there were more coming... (for all of you out there who have people who sign their names in ASCII and talk about how "wasted/trashed/blitzed" they were, fill their text or e–mail with swears, or even how many times they got laid last night, BOOT THEM OFF YOUR BBS! And for any of you little s§§ts reading this, what a shame you don't know what REAL hackers are....you might have learned something.)

If only us hackers could predict the future....I can't imagine what the larger groups, The Humble Guys, RAZOR, FLT, iCE, PE, UNT, ACiD, NeMeSiS, TDT, Future Crew, >T<>C<?, UNC, [come again?] must have to deal with and be going through. But I am getting off the main theme. Anyways, they left and we heckled them, and had a good time. Afterwards, I logged off and Dr.Antristo called me long distance to tell me about the meeting with the inmates

Thanksgiving....Yummmmm! My dad made turkey, peas, corn, mashed potatoes with gravy, and wine. We all feasted, yes the other inmates graced me with their presence too ;). After our meal I went down stairs and began to logon other BBS's looking for typical information. To my surprise I ran across the guy from the Elite BBS I got my A§&T access codes from. After talking to him, and relaying/trading information to him, I told him of the "secret backdoor" in the computer at the DOE. He told me that were such a thing to exist, the military would have gotten rid of it long ago. He also told me that it would be almost suicide to hack into the military mainframes and the such. I asked if it could be done. He really didn't know and said that he wouldn't be a proper judge to say. How nice. I asked about suggestions that he might have, he said that it *SHOULD* be like any other major corporation system. After I listened to him preach about how I would get caught, *REAL* fast if I went into the military computers, I left the BBS to call Dr.Antristo. Doc' was in Gary, he told me to come get pick him up. I hopped into the everfaithful MouseMobile to spring him from his misery. A few hours later, we were back in my room doing what we loved most, hacking. I got into A§gonne and fixed me a new pass, then transferred into the DOE, then with my stolen identification, I made another jump past their "superior" security systems. I gained access through their system by an operator who had been monitoring the system. After chatting with him about physics, and the such,he left me to go in the main system. (I told him I was lost. computer illiterate) The next thing I knew I was looking at information on Star Wars project. Hmmm, how ironic that its really 97% finished. (media said it was 37%....B.S.!) I rummaged around the system for about 10 minutes when the operator came back online and told me that they were shutting down for some kinda core dump, he then told me to go to the #4473 extension for the next 30 minutes. I asked where that was, (remember, I am SUPPOSED to be computer illiterate) he paused and then said something about a military computer database then left. I went to check out this extension... After a 2 second pause I was introduced to a new screen with a real bizarre look to it. It was filled with a lot of stuff and numbers that I have never seen. Dr.Antristo said they were file numbers, and file extensions. I had no clue what all this s**t was, so I went past it like it wasn't there. After searching the mainframe, which looked sorta like a windows program, I found that the system was based in the Washington D.C. area. As soon as I figured out that I was calling there, I unplugged the computer, hung up, and hid under the covers of my bed [haha! ROTFL! :-)]. Dr.Antristo was almost hysterical, he kept screaming that we were in the Pentagon computer again and again. I felt like I was going to be sick. I grabbed all my papers, and text I had printed and began to stuff them into the garbage can. I also ran out to Walgreens to get a REALLY BIG magnet so I could run all my floppies over it,

should someone come to knock on my door. While I was in the middle of my panicked stupor, I stopped to catch a brief glimpse of reality. We had still been using the Loop Numbers. Phew! I told Dr.Antristo that but it took more coaching to calm him down. After several Jolt Colas we felt a little better. The next day at school, after thanksgiving, we kept a weary eye for men in grey sedans and suits to pay us a visit. We agreed at lunch to meet at my house and do a little more work on the subject, and get what we were looking for. Also, we got the impression we were going through the wrong computer systems. We needed to find a better place to start. Hmm, I thought that maybe we could find a better place by going to one of our original hacks...Jet P§opulsion Laboratories. Not a bad idea, and Dr.Antristo liked that better, at least if they caught us, we figured, they'd give us a job.;) After a long dragged out day at school, typical bullies after me, and 1 test in Algebra, I got home to find a State Troopers can parked in my driveway. I almost passed out. My fathers can and my sisters were also there. I got down on the gravel and almost started to write my will and bequeath things. I pulled myself together and walked to the house, if I was going to be arrested, dammit, I would be proud of my achievements! I flung the door open and announced my presence. On the couch was the good 'ol boy....err..woman. My father entered the room and wanted me to meet his girlfriend, (my parents had been divorced for several years). I thought I was going to faint with relief. My father must have noticed because I guess I went pale, he helped me to the chairs, she just sat there and stared at me, like I was a ghost. (guess she's never seen someone shift colours before her eyes like that...rookie) After my father gave me some water to sip, I relaxed back into the chair, the thoughts of being interrogated by CIA ebbing quickly. She introduced herself as Leanna. I introduced myself as.. OUT OF THE ROOM! I left her and my father to bewilder over my strange behaviour and kiss. I went into the basement, and waited for Doc' to knock on the window well. 4:15, and he finally arrived. Geez he was visibly shaken, saying he almost wet his pants when he saw the Cop car in my driveway. Anyways, we got to work, first we called the Loop Number, then the Bank in the other state, (if you don't remember which one, read the 1st text again;)) after connecting, we called another Loop number again, to be sure, then switched on our little box. If we could do anymore like bounce off satellites, I would have, Just to make it look better.:) After 15 minutes of searching for an opening into the main system, an operator began to help me with my trouble. He asked who I was, I told him I was new to the company in the data processing division. (data processing has since changed its title to computer information systems in that company) He asked me for my clearance number, so I told him I had no clue and that I left it on my desk. I guess he agreed with that, because he then asked me why I was logging on from out side the building. I explained that I had unfinished work to do, and that I left work early due to a nasty fever. He fell for it, more or less, then asked me what system I was headed to. Dr.Antristo and I exchanged looks of puzzlement, as we had no clue what he was talking about. I just blurted out the Unix mainframe. He said good luck in finding it to me, and then left me to my surprise. I wondered what he meant by that last statement, and paid it no mind.

We looked around for a few more minutes, checking the files out in the area. I ran into another branch of the computer which took me into another unclassified area of the computer where there were files galore. While I stared at the monitor Dr.Antristo continued to look at the status of our position, in other words, to make sure we were not being traced. By this time, I was well on my way to immortality within the confines of hackerdom! I accessed a pitifully guarded info section containing some files on Project XX-12, which at the time was considered a classified subject. It had nothing to do with anything. It was about some chemical weapons testing in Nevada, I wouldn't even bother D/L'ing that.

In about 20 minutes I found what I wanted, the government section on classified weaponry, and ariel technology. Should I have gotten this, I more than likely would have spread it out, but to this day I know it would have been a bad decision. In those few seconds of my life I had never been more scared. Dr.Antristo had not been watching the Box we created with the 20 second warning flash. A guy calling himself Lt. Commander Vacek got online and told me that we were to start answering questions, or face federal charges of impersonation, invasion of privacy or some s§§t like that...I almost strangled Dr.Antristo for not keeping a better look on the box. The guy on the other line asked me what I had been looking for and I told him I was lost...he paused..I had guessed he didn't like that attitude, so he asked me why I was really there. I told him I was just looking for some information. That he believed so he moved on. I was not happy about this, so I asked him to not do anything, thinking I could get away with it. he told me that hacking was wrong, and that punishment had to be metted out. I asked what he was going to do to me, and he simply replied that he would forget that I was even here, and that I did not exist, IF I would answer to him what the names of the people were in the hacking of the New York Phone company or some s§§t like that. I told him I had no knowledge of that even occurring, (and I still don't...did that happen? Anyone know?) He remained silent for a little before typing again, this time he asked me for the names of some of the people in certain groups...I knew who he was referring to, so I told him I would make a quick text of them and upload it to the computer. This seemed to satisfy him, so he allowed me to do it. I went shelled and went into the DOS to whip up a quick batch of the names.

As I typed, I thought to myself, what was I doing, I was becoming a NARC [Um, 'narc' is short for "narcotics officer. The drugs guy... Perhaps out friend means he is becoming a "grass"?], and for Feds, or Military...I was about to betray all the people I hung around with just to save my own miserable ass. I was about to become what I hated in life the most. A turncoat. I finished typing and returned to the comm program, and to an impatient Lt. Commander. He demanded that I give him the file, so I did. After the transfer he told me I was free to go, and he then took the liberty to boot me himself...how generous of the b§§tard.

Dr.Antristo shut off the computer and looked at me, I could tell he was furious with me for selling out. He then proceeded to

shout loudly about honour, duty, and how I owed it to others that I was still a hacker, and if it wasn't for the rest, I would have been nothing. He then began screaming about the fact that I just became a NARC and that I would be shunned from every BBS on the planet, and that I would be PhReAkEd to death, or to the point of changing my home phone number. I looked back at him laughing, which seemed to just p§§s him off all the more. He wanted to know why I was laughing at him. I told him why. I am many things, I am a hacker, I am a white collar criminal, I am even an idiot. But! The one thing I am *NOT* is a NARC. he demanded to know why it was that I just gave that a§§hole on the other side all the names of some of our co–hackers. I told Dr.Antristo that I figured that the guy on the other end didn't have a clue as to who these people were, but assuming he did, I altered the names. I wrote instead of my friends, I wrote my enemies...and *NOT* from the 'Net. I wrote the names of the a§§holes who picked on me at my high school [ouch!]. When Dr.Antristo heard that he bursted out in laughter and quickly apologized for his misunderstanding. I told him it was VERY understandable, and that I would have acted no differently. however, I wanted to make it clear that I was not, and if fact have never been a NARC. We both had a good laugh at the fact that the info we gave the guy was our nastiest enemies. Later that week we found out that there had been some "questioning" going on at my school that involved some local, state, and "speciality" agents. The guys names I gave had been questioned about some breaking and entering of government computers. No one around here has ever heard of that.....have you?

And I still drink Jolt!

Well, it got nice and warm near the end. All in all an enjoyable read I do declare...

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ON THE WWW

Today I took CompuServe up on their 10 free hours. No doubt I'll find hidden surcharges (don't get nothing for nothing – always the cynic). Anyway, back to the story. I largely ignored CompuServe and jumped straight onto the *Information Superhighway*. I didn't surf, I kinda ambled along the hard–shoulder. Some readers are probably saying "Allo!? I didn't see you at my home page". Well, I didn't call anybody. Didn't have the details. This wasn't *planned* or anything, more like I hooked mum's computer to CompuServe and off I went.

As you can see, I visited **the feds**. Not just any feds, but the *real* feds. That does explain the slight paranoia of why our most-wanted is now a John Doe.

Check out the FBI on "**http:://www.fbi.gov**".

WANTED BY THE FBI

John Doe

Bank Robbery; Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property; Fraud by Wire

John Doe
Photos taken 1989

CONSIDER ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. TAKE NO ACTION TO APPREHEND THIS PERSON YOURSELF. REPORT ANY INFORMATION TO THE NEAREST FBI FIELD OFFICE.

John Doe - Description:

Date of Birth:	March 8, 1940 (has used June 15, 1942)
Place of Birth:	Big Apple, New York
Height:	5' 11"
Weight:	160 lbs.
Build:	Medium
Hair:	Brown (greying)
Eyes:	Blue
Complexion:	Medium
Sex:	Male
Race:	White
Nationality:	American
Scars and Marks and Tattoos:	Devil with word "Les" on right forearm.
Occupations:	carpenter, expert recreational sailor, machinist
Social Security Numbers Used:	123-45-6789; 123-45-6790

Caution: John Doe, an escapee from custody, is being sought for a series of bank robberies in which a handgun was used. **Consider armed and extremely dangerous and an escape risk.**

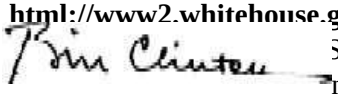
Return to the FBI's "Ten Most Wanted Fugitives" List

Return to the FBI Home Page

Crime has increased over a ten year period, but looks like it is dropping slowly. Try telling that to the 23305 that got murdered (28% due to domestic problems) or the 102096 rapes (77 females in every 100000) or the 619000 robberies or the 1119950 aggravated assaults or 102139 arsons... 1994 figures for the US. Phew!

If you see on the X-Files that there sometimes seems to be a lack of communication between the police subsystems, the FBI WWW page reports that in 1994 a total of 13124 city, county and state police agencies employed 561543 officers and 220567 civilians.

On now to the President of the United States, where I filled in the guestbook. It was, erm, what I expected. To get an idea, imagine how the queen would do her HTML pages and then Americanise it. :-) So, wander over to **html://www2.whitehouse.gov** and see for yourself.

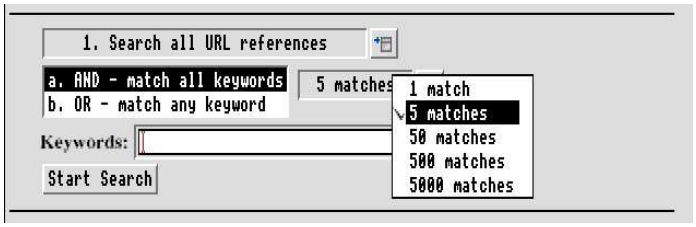


Still, it beats our government net presence'.

I tried a few other sites, found my mother some alpaca wool and got some info on EMC parameters.
In doing this, I tried a few "search engines". While these things did their jobs, some of them lacked friendliness. Of all the ones I saw, the following gets my star of approval...
This can be found at:

http://wwww.cs.colorado.edu/wwww

Note there are four "w"s, it isn't a typo.



The World Wide Web Worm, Best of the Web '94 and apparently serves 3000000 URL's to 2000000 people a month. Not bad!

More to come... And for another WWW extravaganza, Digital Oasis is next...

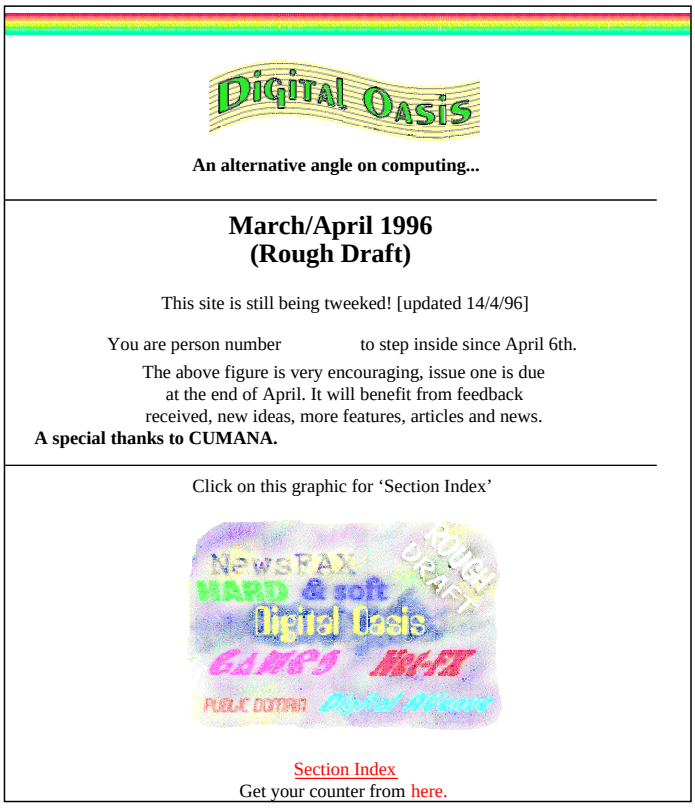
Thanks to DoggySoft – their WebBite converted the HTML to !Draw. Thanks also to CompuServe for giving 10 hours free. 3.5 hours down, 6.5 remaining. :-)

Sadly, the X-Files site didn't impress me. Ah well.

Digital Oasis On-Line media

The Digital Oasis project is managed by Kai Andersen, probably best known for his “peculiar” postings in the comp.sys.acorn newsgroups. I shall say no more as I am guilty of the same offence.

Here, it seems Kai is attempting to kick the media into the electronic world with an on–line magazine. The idea differs from Frobnicate in that it was never meant to go on paper. It is a WWW system through and through. Differences? Well, it ’looks’ very WEBish and doesn’t contain graphics or diagrams to any extent. But don’t let that put you off, the information is there, and should Kai implement JAVA – Digital Oasis could be amazing.



I did not have any form of WWW access, so Kai was nice enough to e–mail this to me as a UUcode. However I don’t think Kai was aware his message would be split up. It took several tries before I got it all in the right order. Hehehe...

The introduction states that what we see is really only a “rough draft” to see how it goes. And it doesn’t seem that bad. Digital Oasis is split into six major sections... News, Internet, Games/Entertainment, Public Domain, DTP/graphics/multimedia/music/sound and reviews. I see nothing overly “techie” there, so maybe there is life for Frobnicate still?

Other parts of Digital Oasis cover PGP encryption, and PD. The best advice I can give is for you to jump over to **http://www.argonet.co.uk/users/aok** and check it out for yourself.

People keep asking me... Who’s Angela?

For those of you that are living a distant planet, Angela Chase is referred to in many of my programs, in one way or another.

She is a fictional entity. The lead role on a totally excellent TV series, “My So-Called Life”.

Real name is Claire Danes, born 1979, and she has a cat called “Fifi–Champion”.

So now that that is sorted out and out of the way... :-)

D’you want *MORE* discussion on Frobnicate?

Link into the **FROBNICATE** echo on FidoNet.

The diary of a demented hacker...

MONDAY

Monday. Damn Monday. Beginning of the week. I hate Mondays. The only half–decent Mondays are these oddities known as “bank holidays”, but then it rains.

What is a “bank holiday” anyway? What’s wrong with “public holiday”? And why give the banks so many holidays? Its the information revolution (apparently) yet it still takes three days to clear a cheque. Hmmm...

TUESDAY

Today’s exploits began when I got myself a double–speed CD–ROM drive. So into my A5000 I crawled, torch in one hand and map in the other. Out came :5 and anything linked to it. In its place went the CD–ROM drive, and a Vectra demo CD. I crawled out :0’s slot, shook myself and sat down. Into :0 went a bootlegged copy of the RiscOS3.6 CD modules. When it eventually worked, it kept on saying the disc was faulty... For a few discs. Well, could be the drive or the fact the damn thing just won’t work.

Just as I was plugging :5 back in again, I noticed a little red switch, about 1mm across, mounted on the ARM3 processor. Sure it wasn’t there before. Well, I grabbed my magnifying glass and looked at the switch. Under it in tiny writing was:

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU PUSH THIS SWITCH!

And a little under that it said:

Oi! Bozo... I said DO NOT PUSH THIS SWITCH!!!

I considered pushing the switch, like one would, but further down it said:

I SWEAR TO EVERY GOD-LIKE ENTITY IN THE WORLD... YOU PUSH THIS SWITCH YOU ARE GONNA BE *SO* SORRY YOU WOULDN’T BELIEVE IT!!!

Needless to say, I poked the button.

I think I wet my pants... Thermonuclear explosion. COMMAND.COM. Stupid looking font. Dissolving window image. Program manager... AAAAAAAH!

MONDAY

I hate it when that happens. It’s a Monday... Again... I’ve been unconscious for two weeks according to this incredible nurse. Or rather this nurse with an incredible body. And no other half to speak of. Oh yummy!

TUESDAY

I’m allowed home, given bail and unleashed in the “care in the community” scheme. One entity not to caring and still rather upset is my A5000. It now displays an unhappy ’smilie’ where the Acorn logo used to be upon start-up. I guess we can safely say that !Paint would refuse to load those porn pictures hidden on the back of the disc... That’s if the filer didn’t wipe them first.

I spent two hours comforting my A5000. I even dropped a little lump of epoxy resin over the switch so it’d never get pressed again. Funny thing is, the switch suddenly vanished as soon as I packed the resin away. The A5000 did a good Michael Buerk impression and said, matter-of-factly, “Acorn were impregnated with aliens in the summer of ’92. These aliens were bent on world destruction by converting everybody to the so–called ’industry standard’ computer. The idea being that all the computers are fitted with real–time clocks inside to keep the time and date. But no ordinary clocks were these. They could not handle the millennium, so instead they would explode. At the stroke of midnight on the 31st of December 1999, western and far-eastern civilisation would be wiped out and the aliens could move into their new home. But Acorn are a clever bunch and a quick peek at the ARM schematics showed up this 486 emulation mode. The aliens were beaten this time, but outside the war rages on with new software and hardware for PCs, the clocks ticking away in the background ready to explode.”

And then it crashed. Well spooky how it did that. Ah well, I suppose this is one of those times when you crank open a few drinks and get completely utterly and totally smashed.

Yeah!

:-)

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FEMALES IN COMPUTERS

When it comes to Females and computers, there aren't many of us.

The figures currently stand at about 25 men to 1 woman. I think that females are almost scared of computers, the net and bulletin boards have their reputation for being mainly male dominated. I have always known boards to be like this. I guess I have got used to that and in a certain way, I don't want this to change ;-)

Females have contributed in the development of computers, along with many males. Maybe in the future, females might gain more of an interest in computers, but at the moment, this isn't happening. If more schools join the net, this might get more females interested in how everything works.

I don't really want this to happen, being unique is a good feeling when you are chatting to people on a board.

All we can do is wait and see what the future holds.....

See Yaz Soon

Helen Rayner (2:254/310.6@Fidonet)

Thank you Helen... An interesting point raised there. Whilst so few females seem to be involved in the field, they've certainly played a few parts in computer history. One of the notable cases is Ada Lovelace. She discovered that the computer was glitchy due to a moth trapped in the circuitry (hence the phrase "debugging").

William Gibson's novels quite often point to information being power, more so than money. It makes sense, much money is now electronically 'moved'. Information is power, and it doesn't require a certain body configuration to play with the computer systems.

I'd be interested to hear your points on this. Please link into the "FROBNICATE" echo (on fidonet) if you can, or e–mail me in the usual way.

On the newsgroups

A few selected highlights from the Internet newsgroups...

From “Geoff” in Comp.Sys.Acorn.Misc:

Message-ID: <4nkcul$6d7@yama.mcc.ac.uk>

I thought some people might like to see this...

[Article crossposted from uk.jobs.offered , Author was David Adcock , Posted on Wed, 15 May 1996 15:28:00 GMT]

Acorn/Archimedes - Train to WinNT - £20,000 - Thames Valley
Our client, a major network distributor is seeking a Network Systems Specialist with experience of Acorn and/or Archimedes networking environments to provide 2nd and 3rd line support to their Help-Desk and Field Engineering Staff. This diverse role also includes training and technical consultancy.

In return for your Acorn networking experience, our client will train you in Windows NT, thus ensuring your skills are brought right up-to-date.

To apply for this post and/or immediate registration onto our Job-Seekers Database phone NOW for further details. Fax/Snail CVs welcome.

Haybrook Appointments	:	Voice: 01865 742456 (8.30am-7.30pm)
Suite B, Regal Court	:	Fax: 01865 742459
112 London Road	:	Email: haybrook@cix.compulink.co.uk
Headington	:	
Oxford, OX3 9AU	:	CVs in ascii/plain text/Word6 please

----- end quote

Right up to date? Oh yes, Windows NT networking, isn’t it so advanced.

From “Alan Muscat” in Comp.Sys.Acorn.Misc:

Message-ID: <960518094449@digibank.demon.co.uk>

So begins another weary thread.

Every now again I get the strong desire to just pull out of the online world altogether.
I wonder how many people reading this thread have the same desire?
Do you sometimes get the feeling that you are spending a great deal of money wasting a lot of your life. Now we all know that Newsgroups and the web can provide some excellent information and contacts. But in the final analysis, is the time and money spent downloading and reading stuff from these two sources really worth what you get from it? Looking at it another way, though not very originally, would you consider that you would be that much worse off for never having bought a modem? What could you have done with the time spent downloading, reading and replying to postings? Spent more time reading a good book? Got more work done at work or at home? Watched a good movie? Spent more time with your wife/husband/girlfriend/boyfriend? Spent more time with the children? Spent time creating that killer app? Spent some time getting your life in order? Studied more effectively? Revised more? Saw more of your mates? And on it goes. Are we paying for the privilege of wasting our time? And what is it doing to our health? To our eyes? Anyone got RSI? Me too, just at the bottom of my neck? And I can’t sue any one for it!

OK, I know that there are some excellent discussions, and some useful information. But there sure is a lot of drivel. A LOT!

Could it be that there is a part of us which just can’t resist the gossip-like information? What’s new? What’s cooking? What’s happening? We have an insatiable desire to know. I’m like this, so I would like your encouragement, your help, in giving up this addiction, so that I can: ‘Why don’t you just switch off your modem and go and do something less boring instead.’ Get myself a life!

Heck! It’s only a bloody computer.

Alan

The making of CDTracker

From: Malcolm Knight
Organization: The Digital Darkroom

CDtracker - the most comprehensive Audio CD Player and database for RISC OS

CDtracker is a very old program, it could be argued that it is more than thirteen years old because that was when the BBC micro and the first CD players arrived on the scene - and I bought one of each.

I needed the computer because I was having to do so many statistical jobs for my employer and I needed the CD player because I was fed up with the clicks and pops of vinyl records.

It took me five months to teach myself to program to the level when I could get the computer to do the jobs I used to do with a pocket calculator and print out the result in a format my bosses would accept. Over a period of three or four years I wrote many more statistical and database programs for use at work some of which remained in use until at least 1992.

My CD collection also grew quite impressively until one day in 1987 I came home with a new CD only to find that I had all the music on it already on other CDs! That same evening I started writing a database in Mode 7 on my BBC Master computer with the intention of being able to take a printout of my CD collection on future shopping trips. Before long it developed into a very useful program. My philosophy was that every time I needed to perform a particular data manipulation then I would program it in so that eventually it would do everything.

When I programmed at work the results were used by people who knew nothing of computers and who made every conceivable mistake, so I had learnt that there must always be an easy way of reversing any action and I kept this in mind too. So there are plenty of editing functions. In fact now that some data can be read directly from a CD some of these may be redundant but it does at least ensure that, alone among CD database programs, it is fully usable by those without CDROM drives.

The program developed spasmodically as new requirements cropped up throughout the next five years but I then decided the BBC micro (and Epson dot-matrix printer) was not producing documents to a high enough standard and it was time to update it.

During those last five years at work I had been made to use IBM PCs and grew to hate the things so when the time came to spend my own money I took a look at Acorns. In the end I chose an A5000 mainly for its ability to run my old Mode 7 software. I even insisted on getting a copy of the old Basic Editor so that I could carry on living in the past; but after a few weeks I grew to appreciate the Desktop more than the Command line. However programming multi-tasking programs was obviously beyond me.

When they came out in May 1993 I bought on impulse the RISC OS3 PRMs, took a look and threw them to one side in disgust. What the hell was a SWI anyway?
But a hundred quid is a lot to waste so I went back to them a couple of weeks later and also bought the Risc User book ‘Wimp Programming for All’. After I had read it three or four times it began to make some sense. First I got an Icon on the Icon bar and managed to make it run my Mode 7 CD database from there. I never did get around to learning anything about Templates which is why CDtracker does not use them. Later I made a window and learnt something about window and icon flags. Gradually and step by step the window grew icons and menus until a primitive replica of the Mode 7 program emerged.

I had some hopes that I would then be able to transfer the old Procedures and Functions to the new program but apart from one that did the sorting every single one had to be rewritten from scratch.

(Even the sorting procedure has gone now). However I do remember saying to a friend only four months after starting the multi-tasking version that the program was finished. What nonsense! Several dozen new facilities were put into it after that.

Certain parts of the code were also rewritten as my Wimp programming skills improved. In particular the Menu procedures were rewritten three times as the original procedures just couldn't cope with the later requirements.
Menus are currently constructed 'on the fly' so that greying, ticking, sub-menu availability etc. are all assessed when the menu button is pressed and therefore (I hope) always reflect the current status of the program without keeping umpteen flags at TRUE or FALSE which was the original method.

As the multi-tasking version of CDtracker was written largely as a programming exercise it uses as many different programming techniques as is sensible to incorporate.

It uses RAM transfer for data output when appropriate; it uses Pipe FS, it changes its Icons when changing Screen Mode, it uses Pane Windows AND redisplays them in the correct place if they are half off screen when the Screen Mode is changed. There are many commercial applications which cannot cope with that! CDtracker also uses its own Heap memory management system. Watch the Task manager bob up and down as different sized files are loaded!

It also does things which are probably taking the belt and braces approach too far. For example if two copies of the program are running and both reading the very same bit of data, the two copies will send messages to each other so that both are aware of any editing of the data. And there are some more even more obscure, but it all makes for a very robust program.

In December 1994 I treated myself to a CDROM drive and began experiments with playing audio CDs with little single tasking test programs. I discovered several quirks, if not bugs, in CDFS in the process and by early January 1995 started coding in earnest.

One of the problems was that the old data format which had existed since 1987 was now required to hold even more data and for that reason most fields now hold two pieces of data coded into one and decoded when read. It makes life interesting for the programmer but at least the user doesn't have to worry about anything.

By June 1995 the program was taken over for sale by Dane Koekoek of Werewolf Software and was later that year very favourably reviewed in Archive magazine. However the reviewer did make two or three suggestions for improvement which he wrote were unreasonable to expect at the price. These were all included within a week or two of his comment.

Following the sale of the program at Acorn World in October 1995 some user feedback started coming in but somewhat to my relief not a single bug report - though it must be admitted that I found quite a number of obscure ones myself - but nothing bad enough to bring up an error box.

The feedback from customers fell mainly into two categories. Those that wanted more and more facilities and those that felt the program took too much memory. So CDtracker Plus was born which addresses these conflicting requirements.

Currently little is being done to the program as it seems to satisfy all its users. I have a very few ideas for incorporation before the end of the year but nothing momentous. However I am eagerly awaiting Acorn's long threatened new version of CDFS which they say will be so extensively changed that no current CD player will work. If I can get hold of that new version then CDtracker most certainly will use it.

I wonder if the new CFDS will come with the new OS to support StrongARM?

Your version of Impression may well be a total cock-up on StrongARM but CDtracker will run so who cares about anything else?

Malcolm Knight

EXCLUSIVE

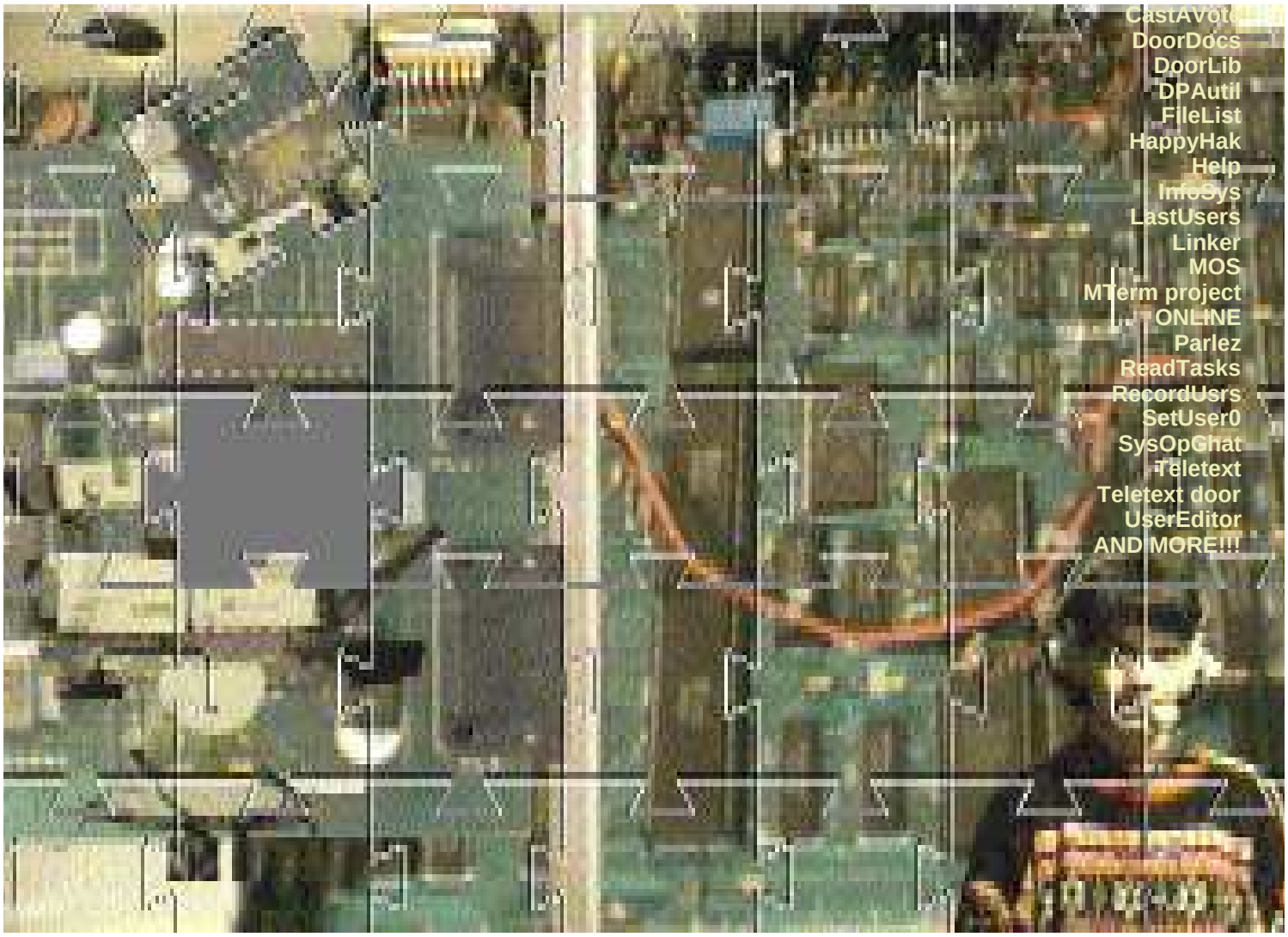
Frobnicate is proud to announce the engagement of **HELEN RAYNER** to **GLENN RICHARDS.**

We wish them all the happiness in the future.

Note to parents and all concerned people. Glenn said he'd leave the wording to me... This is *seriously* tongue–in–cheek.

:–)

Is a little *something* missing from your BBS?



You too can enjoy BudgieSoft's huge contribution to the Acorn BBS scene. All doors and utilities are FREE and several are used on the big BBSs. Many programs get updated/revised along the way and several new projects are around.

"Richard Murray", 2:254/86.1@Fidonet or "rmurray@arcticbb.demon.co.uk".
Or look on the major BBSs. BudgieSoft areas on Digital Databank and ArcTic.

THE FROBNICATE AWARDS - ready?

The Frobnicate awards will be held in the next issue of Frobnicate.

Basically, you must cast your vote for each of the categories listed below. Must like the Acorn User awards, but more hectic.

Here are the categories with a brief explanation:

1. Best Acorn software package...
Votes for the best software package. It can be commercial or PD or whatever.

2. Crappiest Acorn software package...
Votes for the crappiest package.

3. Best Acorn commercial software...
This is specifically for the best software money can baaaaeeee!

4. Crappiest Acorn commercial software...
This is for those programs you bought, loaded and deleted and kicked yourself for buying in the first place.

5. Best Acorn PD software...
Best PD/ShareWare (not CareWare).

6. Crappiest Acorn PD software...
Guess.

7. Best Acorn advertisment...
The glossiest, coolest and most 'monty' advert for any Acorn product.

8. Crappiest Acorn advertisment...
The exact opposite of 7.

9. The lame but good Acorn advertisment...
The best 'limited budget' Acorn product advert.

10. Most overspec'ed Acorn product...
An award for the most overspec'd Acorn product. One would imagine the Creative Realities laserquest gizmo can pull this award. :-)

11. Most absolute bollox in an advert...
For those adverts where you think "they expect *me* to believe *that!!!*". This is open to PC advertisers. Piles of bollox there. When you vote for this, you must say WHY you voted for what you did.

12. Acorn VapourWare...
The amazing disappearing software award. What happened to that 8-disc space game advertised around 1990?

13. Unlucky...
Vote for anything you think is jinxed.

14. Absolutely coolest glue my retinas to the monitor unbelievable Acorn game...
Vote for the most mega game you've EVER played.

15. Artistic license...
Make up your own category and vote for it. Sane or wacky, serious or whatever...

16. Best EuroSong '96 entry...
17. Worst EuroSong '96 entry...
18. Best modem...
19. Worst modem...
20. Best Acorn paper–based magazine...
21. Best Acorn disc–based magazine...
22. Best Acorn BBS...
23. Best BBS in general...
24. Worst Acorn BBS...
25. Best WEB site.

Votes to be in by, um, y'all can manage a week can't you? :-)

29th May 1996

EDITORS PAGE part two

And here closes another issue of Frobnicate.

As you may have noticed, this issue is more tongue–in–cheek than usual. Heck, if something hasn't made you laugh, I should give up now.

So how was in all put together? Painfully. The longest part was a kind of imaginative block. I did the first few pages in March, some in April and the last ten pages at the end of May. It happens sometimes. I've not worked on my story/screenplay for about a year. My mind isn't in the right 'pattern' to get things going smoothly.

Enough madness... On the Frobnicate. The front cover was *remarkably* simple. Look and you shall see. Then skip a few bits to the nice little image in the BBS bits advert. Full marks to anybody who thought of Atomwide. Unlike their people, I had 4Mb freespace, a video digitiser, a Hi8 camera, !Paint. !Draw and !ChangeFSI. The jigsaw outline is a bit iffy but all in all it doesn't look too tragic for what it was created with.

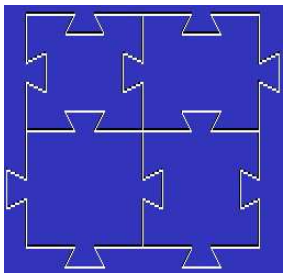
!Paint is quite versatile if you're a bit of a die-hard.

Firstly I grabbed an image looking across a BBC micro issue 7 circuit board. Serious Acornites and worthy clan members will have spotted the BBC micro 'layout' several pages away. The image was just a touch out of focus, but not so much it was a big blur.

Onto that was laid an image of part of the circuit board of a Serial Port dual serial podule – to reflect the heavy comms bias. The sp_dual image was gamma corrected in !ChangeFSI because the original was rather dark.

Then images of myself and a studio broadcast camera were laid over the image. These were taken last year for an image I was creating. These signify myself and my interest – video. Or something like that. :-)

By now we could add in the jigsaw. This was a rather lame repeating pattern created in !Draw and saved as a sprite. It was resized a few times until it looked good. Sure, I'd like to have had proper jigsaw pieces – but just you try creating them in !Draw... Hehe... Blue background to show the design better. It's a mask.



All that remained was to grab one of the 'pieces', blank it and import a rotated copy.

Then it was run through !ChangeFSI to dither it to half–size. This loses the resolution, but also loses a good few tens of thousands of bytes.

Okay, the final image is lacking somewhat, but compare 50K to 200K. Which would you rather download huh? :-)

And that's it.

This concludes Frobnicate issue 8. I hope you had a good read.

Richard.

PS: The CompuServe stuff *was* free. Pity it was so slow. Ah well... :-)

CONTACTS

Here are some contact numbers and addresses relating to Frobnicate:

Frobnicate article submissions.	“Frobnicate Submissions”, 2:254/86.1
Frobnicate article requests	“InfoSys”, 2:254/86.16. New users should enter “HELP FROBNICATE” as the message body.
Frobnicate enquiries	“Frobnicate”, 2:254/86.1
Frobnicate complaints	“FComplaints”, 2:254/86.1
Publishers and distribution	“Hissing Spinach”, 2:254/86.1
The editor	“Richard Murray”, 2:254/86.1 “rmurray@arcticbb.demon.co.uk”
BudgieSoft	“BudgieSoft”, 2:254/86.1

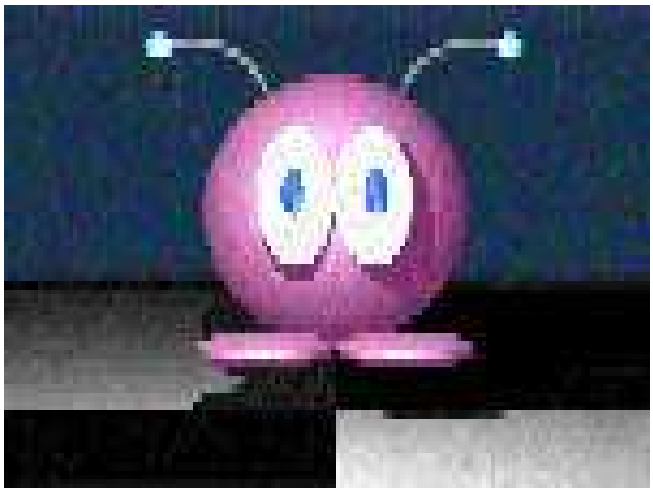
BudgieSoft areas:

ArcTic BBS	+44 (0)181 903 1308/1309; textual and file area.
Digital Databank BBS	+44 (0)1707 323531/329306; textual only.

BudgieSoft files are sent to ArcTic first. Within a matter of days the files percolate to other good BBSs such as Arcade (+44 (0)181 654 2212 / 655 4412).

Have you an idea or article for Frobnicate?

We can accept many major formats from the Acorn and PC world. Simply send your details to the editor or submissions outlining what your intentions are.



BYE!