

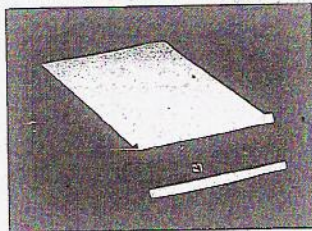
**FAX/MODEM**

## Prometheus is a fine example of latest fax/modems

BY KAREN BROPHY  
REVIEWS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

If you've ever wondered what happened to the concept of a paperless office, the growing fax/modem market just may offer a step in the right direction. The most recent crop of fax/modems are speed demons that let you send and receive files and faxes, and they even act as answering machines for regular, old-fashioned voice messages — an especially helpful feature if you have a single phone line and keep your computer and modem hooked up all day.

The Prometheus Ultima Home Office fax/modem for Apple Macintosh computers has V.32bis data transmission (14,400 bits per second [bps]), with 57,600 bps possible with data compression, and offers Group III fax capabilities at 9,600 bps. The unit is compatible with the Hayes command set and the Bell System



The Prometheus is convenient for modem owners with one phone line.

102/2121a. MaxFax, the software bundled with the Prometheus, determines the nature of the call — data, fax, or voice — and routes it accordingly.

Setup took approximately 20 minutes, and I was pleasantly surprised when I was able to connect to CompuServe without a hitch. The answering machine feature is truly efficient; in fact, it was more reliable than the one we normally use. And if you expect voice and faxes on the same line, you can't beat the simplicity. You just leave MaxFax running in the background while you work or when you leave, and you can receive voice or fax messages without any extra preparation. One glitch was that the system erroneously read hang-up calls as incoming fax messages. (The vendor says this has been fixed.)

I encountered a few minor problems with MacKnowledge, the communications program included with the unit. I had to tweak the program slightly to get the script to run. Using MacKnowledge's auto-select protocol feature when downloading data was a snap. However, when I attempted to select a particular protocol, MacKnowledge continued to use its auto-select function.

I hated to part with the Prometheus Ultima Home Office. At \$649, it is a superb value. A Windows version will be available in late September and will list for \$539.

You can reach Prometheus Products Inc., in Tualatin, Ore., at (503) 692-9600; fax: (503) 691-1101.

**MULTIMEDIA SOFTWARE**

## The Jammer: great beat, easy to use

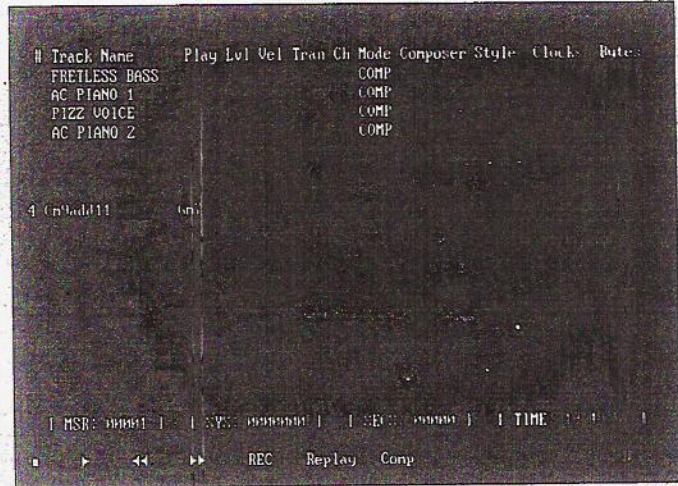
BY JOHN WALKENBACH  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Multimedia developers who need music to accompany a presentation typically seek out MIDI files from public domain or commercial sources, or hire professional musicians to compose original music. The Jammer, a \$175 program from Soundtrek, opens the door to a new possibility. This innovative program generates high-quality MIDI files in a wide variety of styles. It helps to have some musical background, but even nonmusicians can produce some impressive compositions by letting The Jammer do all the work.

The Jammer requires a Roland MPU-401 or compatible MIDI interface and a multitimbral synthesizer to generate the sound (it doesn't support any sound cards). The product blends elements of a standard MIDI sequencer program with automated "studio musicians" that can play drums, bass, and rhythm based on chord sequences that you provide. Alternatively, you can let The Jammer generate its own chord patterns in a style that you control using dialog boxes. The program is almost infinitely flexible — you can make subtle or drastic changes to any of the instruments playing, add more instruments, change the time signature, and so on.

While you are working on a song, you can recombine it to get different variations. When you hear a variation you like, you can save the generated data in standard MIDI format. You can then add additional parts automatically, record them on your synthesizer, or copy and paste parts within a song.

The developer of The Jammer is an accomplished musician and an excellent programmer to boot. The interface is well designed, and the program is very



If you need a tireless backup band for your multimedia applications or music practice, The Jammer can play drums, bass, and rhythm.

easy to learn and use. The technical aspects of music and harmony — along with randomness — combine to produce original compositions that can sometimes rival professional musicians. I focused mainly on jazz and new age styles, although the program can also generate pop, rock, reggae, country and western, and even classical styles.

The sequencing features are fairly limited compared to products like Twelve Tone Systems' Cakewalk Pro and Passport Designs Inc.'s Master Tracks Pro, but you can always use another sequencer to fine-tune your composition. My only complaint is the lack of support for transferring system-exclu-

sive messages to a synthesizer so they can be set up automatically for each song. According to the developer, an upcoming version will feature an option to generate melodies in addition to bass, rhythm, and drums.

Besides being useful for multimedia applications, The Jammer is an excellent tool to practice with because it provides a tireless backup band that will play to your specifications without complaining. In any case, this is one of the most impressive music programs I have seen. You can hear recorded samples by calling (404) 623-5887.

You can reach Soundtrek, based in Duluth, Ga., at (404) 623-0879.

**WORD PROCESSING SOFTWARE**

## Quicksoft's PC-Write 4.0 polishes basic tools

BY JOHN LOMBARDI  
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

By modern word processor standards, PC-Write is a horse-drawn buggy. In features and ease of use it doesn't compare to Microsoft Word for Windows, WordPerfect 5.1 for Windows, Lotus Ami Pro, or even WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS.

If a buggy is what you want, though, PC-Write is the finest available. Basically an editor with a print formatter attached, PC-Write has earned the respect and enthusiasm of its legion of users because it has always been quick, easy to use, infinitely customizable, and a strong editor.

In Version 4.0, the screen display is much improved by color and pull-down menus. There are a variety of useful enhancements for the diehard PC-Write user, including mouse support. You can set up different levels of use depending on your capabilities and assign keystroke macros or commonly used commands to four button bars. Using spe-

cial profiles, you can create custom versions of PC-Write for different uses.

Several new tools enhance columnar control, including a column-block cut and paste. The program also will do simple addition of any numbers appearing in a marked area. You can use multiple windows to view up to 10 documents at a time. The document size is limited by conventional memory (PC-Write does not yet support extended or expanded

memory), but the program has a rather nifty work-around — called file series — that lets you link files for editing and printing by using sequential names (for instance, Story1, Story2, Story3). PC-Write comes with a modest spelling checker and a useful thesaurus.

I would recommend PC-Write 4.0 primarily for people who need a fast, effective, and customizable editor. If you need fancy printing, complex fonts, newsletter layouts, graphics, frames, objects, and other modern conveniences, you will do best to get a modern word processing program.

PC-Write Advanced Level, the main program, lists for \$89. For power users, there is the Wizard's Kit (\$37), which includes an in-depth reference manual and disk of sample files. You can purchase both for \$118.

Quicksoft Inc., based in Seattle, can be reached at (800) 888-8088.



Version 4.0 of PC-Write affords better columnar control, including block cut and paste.