small computer support group

NEWSLETTER, No. 1, NOVEMBER 1980

INTRODUCTION

The Small Computer Support Group sponsors this NEWSLETTER as an information exchange for Indiana University small computer users. The NEWSLETTER's philosophy is very simple. It will reflect the interests and enthusiasm of its readers.

Because there are many useful small system journals available, this NEWSLETTER will concentrate on topics of special interest to Indiana University users and especially on opportunities and problems related to the University's computing environment.

Given the modest size of this NEWSLETTER we prefer articles and notes that do not exceed one single-spaced typed page. If you have suggestions for articles or questions about aspects of small computer use at Indiana University, please send them in and we will attempt to answer the questions or commission the articles.

This NEWSLETTER will only be useful if you write or call us with your comments.

John V. Lombardi
Editor, Bryan 205, IUB

****

WORD PROCESSING AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY

The University Office of Administrative Computing is currently developing a policy statement about electronic word processing for administrative and academic offices. This effort is the result of considerable research and product evaluation and is designed to provide the University with a range of word processing options that will be efficient, cost effective, and compatible with other computing resources on the campuses. The NEWSLETTER will carry an article on this policy when it is issued.

In addition, the University Office of Administrative Computing has evaluated two CP/M based word processing packages. Currently both Word Star and Magic Wand are recommended. However, this does not imply that other micro word processors have been tested and found wanting, only that these two have been evaluated and found satisfactory.

Because of the strong interest in micro computer word processors the NEWSLETTER will initiate a series of user evaluations on word processing packages for the micro recommended by the Small Computer Support Group. Please let the NEWSLETTER know if

you would be willing to prepare a report on a word processing system with which you have had experience.

****

DISKETTE RELIABILITY ON 5 1/4" DRIVES
---APPLE, TRS-80, ETC.---

Because the spindle on the 5 1/4" floppy disk drive is not spinning when a diskette is inserted, the diskette may not seat squarely on the spindle. This causes the diskette to spin eccentrically resulting in unreliable or even totally inoperable disk functions. The problem is most readily identified by being able to initialize and copy diskettes without apparent error, but their being nonfunctional when inserted in another drive or even reinserted in the same drive. Having to insert a diskette several times before it finally reads or writes also indicates this as a problem. APPLE's Disk II will sometimes show WRITE PROTECTED even though the disk is not protected when this problem exists.

There appears to be no definite fix for the problem, however, there are several actions which may help.

1. Instead of just shoving the diskette in and pressing the latch shut, jiggle the latch several times before pressing it closed. Or latch and unlatch the drive several times before attempting to use the disk. These actions appear to help center the diskette on the spindle.

2. Use diskettes with reinforced hubs.

Verbatim makes a 5 1/4" diskette, number MD-577-01, with a reinforced hub. If this problem is a significant one for Indiana University users, we can get Central Stores to stock this instead of the standard model. It is also possible to build up the hub of a standard diskette using a reinforcing kit. The Small Computer Support Group has one by INMAC (7955-MP) which will handle both 5 1/4" and 8 " diskettes. The kit costs $27.00 while the reinforcing rings are $5.00 for a package of 20 (7950-MP). We have not had much experience with the kit and cannot be sure it is a reliable solution. The Group will make its kit available to users who would like to try this as a potential fix.

****

COMPUTER SUPPLIES AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY

The following list of computer supplies are available from Central Stores, Bloomington, and Central and Scientific Stores, Indianapolis. If you have a University account number you may order these supplies.

BLOOMINGTON (1980-81 Prices)

B 87 20010	Ribbon, Decwriter II (LA-36)	3.36
B 87 20050	Ribbon, Decwriter III (LA-35, LA180, LS-120	5.54
B 86 55050	Paper, Teletype, 8 7/16" x 4 1/2" (roll) ctn.	18.85
B 81 05030	Paper, continuous (fanfold) 9 1/2" x 11" ctn.	17.46
B 81 05150	Paper, continuous (fanfold) 14 7/8" x 11" ctn.	21.47
B 80 85050	Binder, data processing 14 7/8" x 11"	1.68
B 80 85010	Binder, data processing 10 5/8" x 11"	1.68
B 88 02050	Tape-C-60 Audio cassette	1.06
B 88 02110	Tape (SIC) 5 1/4" mini diskette sinle side, single density soft sector (box of 10)	32.48

B 88 02150   Tape (SIC) 8" diskette, single side, single density soft   37.96
              sector (box of 10)

INDIANAPOLIS (1979-80 Prices)

M 60 65100   Binder, nylon post, gray pressboard (14-911N) 9 7/8" x 11"   1.85
M 60 65150   Binder, nylon post, gray pressboard (14-1411) 14 7/8" x 11"   1.32
M 60 65500   Index, 6 division, for 1411 binder   1.13
M 60 65700   Paper, Teletype, oiled, 1 in. (roll)   1.65
M 60 65750   Paper, Teletype, 8 7/16" (roll)   1.16
M 60 65825   Ribbon, Teletype, black   1.09

****
SMALL COMPUTER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES AT IU

    The following items are the beginning of a directory of Small Computer
resources at Indiana University. If you know of other people who have
experience and who are willing to help others or if you know of other IU resources
please let us know.

---SMALL COMPUTER SUPPORT GROUP, Memorial West, M10, 337-2893. John W. Smith.
---NEWSLETTER, Bryan Hall 205, IUB, 337-8669. John V. Lombardi.
---OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL COMPUTING, Education 216, IUB, 337-9137.
   William H. Sanders.
---INVENTORY OF SMALL COMPUTERS. Available from Small Computer Support Group.
   August 1980.
---Advice on terminal options. Paul Glenn, WCC, Memorial Hall, IUB, 337-9255.

****
APPLE DOS 3.3 UPGRADE TO THE DISK II

    A kit is now available to upgrade the APPLE Disk II from DOS 3.2 to DOS 3.3.
This kit consists of two new PROMS for the Disk controller card, a revised DOS
manual, and two diskettes.

    The hardware upgrade is very simple, involving the replacement of two PROMS
on the controller card using an extractor tool supplied with the kit.

    However, the software upgrade is not quite so easy. This upgrade makes
APPLE Disk II diskettes into 16 sector diskettes instead of the previous version's
13 sector diskettes. Obviously, the old 13 sector diskettes will not run un-
assisted after the hardware upgrade. One of the diskettes supplied with the kit,
called BASICS, must be booted first and then 13 sector diskettes run. The other
diskette, the DOS 3.3 System Master, contains a program that copies files from 13
sector diskettes onto 16 sector diskettes. This program will work with either one
or two drives. For users with only one drive, it is relatively tedious to make
this conversion, and given the reliability problems with unreinforced 5 1/4" floppy
diskettes, the aggravation level can be quite high.

    The advantages of the new DOS are more useable space on the diskettes and
a couple of useful new copying programs on the new System Master. The cost of this
item is $65.00 at Data Domain in Bloomington.

The Small Computer Support Group is working on a block purchase of DOS 3.3 update kits, which will provide a considerable price reduction. If you are interested in participating in the purchase, please call the Group. This update to DOS 3.3 is strongly recommended. The Group will also help users install the PROMS.

****
MICROS AND THE WCC

There is a sizeable group of users who have expressed interest in utilities that will make transferring files from and to WCC easy. At present, it is quite difficult to build a file at WCC and get it transferred to an APPLE, for example, for manipulation and storage. Similarly, the reverse process is also difficult. A number of able and cooperative people in the Small Computer Support Group and the WCC are working on solutions to this problem and the NEWSLETTER will keep you informed of what progress occurs.

Additionally, a number of users have wrestled with software solutions to the problem. One user has been able to write an Applesoft program that uses the D.C. Hayes Micromodem, the WCC utility PCOPY, and the APPLE disk to copy lines from a WCC file into an APPLE sequential disk file. This program is very clumsy, very inelegant, and very slow. But it does work. Any users with comparable or more appropriately, better solutions, should let the NEWSLETTER know how your program works.

We have ordered a program called ASCII EXPRESS II (Southwestern Data Systems $59.95) which promises the ability to up and down load files in 20K blocks from any machine with dial-up access. It is supposed to do this at up to 300 baud, full upper/lower case, etc. This is a program written for the APPLE II with the D.C. Hayes Micromodem, although it is also supposed to do the file transfers with the APPLE Communications Card. The NEWSLETTER will report on how this works in the IU computing environment in the next issue.

****
NEW APPLE II JOURNAL

The NEWSLETTER has a new micro magazine that will apparently be dedicated to the APPLE II. Called NIBBLE: THE REFERENCE FOR PERSONAL COMPUTING, this publication is issued by MICRO-SPARC, INC., P.O. Box 325, Lincoln, Mass. 01773, and 8 issues a year cost $15.00. It is also available at Data Domain in Bloomington at $2.00 a copy.

The current issue reviews products and has an interesting text processing program written in Applesoft.

The NEWSLETTER will be glad to provide notes on significant articles in other journals related to micro computing. Please send in suggestions.

****
APPLE, WCC, AND THE LA-34 PRINTER

Prior to purchasing an APPLE II+, I used my Digital Decwriter IV to communicate with WCC. The LA-34 is a dependable dot matrix printer with a printing speed of 300 baud. Naturally, I wanted to use my printer with either the WCC or the APPLE. This took some experimentation. For those in a similar situation, the following information

may be of some value.

It is my experience that the High Speed Serial Interface card does not permit the APPLE and the LA-34 to work in harmony. However, the serial and parallel APPLE interface (AIO board) does work perfectly. The settings of the "DIP-STICKS" on the internal communication switches of the LA-34 are as follows.

```
SWITCH 1--ON
SWITCH 2--OFF
SWITCH 3--OFF
SWITCH 4--ON
SWITCH 5--OFF
SWITCH 6--ON
SWITCH 7--ON
SWITCH 8--ON
```

If you have any questions please call me at 337-2605.

Jerry McIntosh

```
*******************************
```
SMALL SYSTEMS SUPPORTED AT IUB

The Small Computer Support Group currently supports the following systems with hardware and software assistance.

---MICRO SYSTEM I. A Development System. Z80 based on an STD BUS and running CP/M.
---MICRO SYSTEM II. APPLE II and II+. 6502 based system.
---MICRO SYSTEM III. A Development System. 6809 based with an STD BUS.
---MINI SYSTEM I. LSI-11, DEC system.

The Group is also evaluating the TRS-80 and Super Brain for possible support. The NEWSLETTER will carry articles on these systems in future issues.

```
*******************************
```

This NEWSLETTER is sent to the Small Computer Support Group mailing list. Others who may be interested should send the following information to the Group.

NAME_____

Mailing Address_____

IU Department or Unit and Phone_____

Special Interests_____

----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- ----- -----

Small Computer Support Group
NEWSLETTER
Bryan Hall 205, IUB
Bloomington, IN 47405