

Algorithmica Japonica

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Tokyo PC Users

The Tokyo PC Users Group

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Contributions Welcome!

Write an article or review, send a drawing, upload a graphic, or forward something you downloaded from the Internet. If you're not sure how to contribute, or want to talk it over first, call or fax the Editor, or email him. See this page for contact numbers. If you write an original article, it'll also be posted on the WWW!

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TPC Membership

Full membership, including the *Algorithmica Japonica*, free meeting attendance, and other benefits is ¥10,000 per year, plus a one-time ¥3,000 initiation fee. (Corporate, family and student memberships are also available.)

A one-year subscription to *Algorithmica Japonica* is ¥6,000 for non-members. Call the TPC Hotline or contact any of the TPC officers for information.

TPC Monthly Meetings

The first Thursday of the month (2nd Thursday if a holiday) in the basement of the **Tokyo Union Church**. Doors open at 6:30 and meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. Fee for non-members is ¥1,000. See map on back cover.

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This month's column must begin with both thanks and apologies to **David Parry**, the *AJ*'s intrepid Foreign Columnist. David has long been a valued contributor to the TPC, and as the editor I particularly value his unstinting and utterly reliable, always timely and interesting, contribution to the newsletter. This issue, he even inserted a couple of direct plugs, suggesting to you readers that you send me your opinions, raves, complaints, or whatever about **Windows 98**. Thanks, David. Knowing that I can count on your column is one of the things that has kept me in this job.

Apologies are due for something of which I have yet to be taken to task: overediting. My policy with the editing of the *AJ* has always been to do the minimum necessary editing. Other publications I am or have been involved in editing get quite different treatment, but I have attempted to cut or change as little as possible of the articles in the *AJ* for several reasons, the main one of which is that I wish to retain as much of the writers' "character" as possible. Most of the writers, after all, are people whom we members meet face-to-face at meetings, or communicate with by e-mail or in the news-groups. I want their articles to ring as true to their personalities as possible. A few contributors have accused me of *underediting*, and there is a case to be made for that view, but I'd rather change too little than too much. *This* time, though, I had to cut some of David's *Ionic Column* due to "technical difficulties beyond our control".

Unusually, this issue has been ready to go somewhat earlier than usual, partly because of the new deadline (the 15th of the month...mark it down on your calendars) and partly because of the meeting being a week later this month. I was giving it a final double-check prior to writing this column (I always save my column for last, in case I need to use the space for something else), and was giving David's column its last perusal, *when The Brute suddenly crashed*. No warning. No reason that I can see. No problems on rebooting. But several damaged files...the ones that were open. In short, parts of



David's column got eaten. Since I have the original text file on my *work* computer, and since I cannot install **MS Publisher** on that computer, all the *AJ* work has to be done at home and I can't look at his original in the time that I have left, or expect to request and receive a retransmission from David. Since I very stupidly deleted the previous edits of this month's *AJ* (pride — or overconfidence — goeth before a fall), I was forced to make the best of a bad situation. I believe I may have had to delete as many as three or four unrecoverable sentences from the article. Thus, apologies are due both to David and to you readers. *Mea culpa*. Next time, I shall be more cautious about backing up, and less eager to delete older editions.

...if any of you are using Windows 98, how about writing a short review, or even just a short email message about what you see as its pros and cons?

With two hard disk drives virtually empty, for a total of well over three gigabytes of available space, you'd think I wouldn't have to worry much about freeing up disk space. The thing is, those other two drives are SCSI drives, and I've had so many problems in the past with systems intermittently deciding not to recognize SCSI drives that I don't really trust them much. I am paranoid, I suppose.

Finally, I would like to echo David's suggestion: if any of you are using Windows 98, how about writing a short review, or even just a short email message about what you see as its pros and cons? I haven't decided when to install it, if ever, and I imagine others are in the same position. I'd like to run it/them in the next issue, if possible. Stay tuned.



Prez Sez

A Message From President Ken Cotton

"I promise to attend as many meetings as I can." Not much of a presidential acceptance speech, but that's all I could think to say at the time. Maybe I can say a little more here. First off, I'd like to thank a lot of people; The members that attended the meeting and voted, **Mike Kato** for offering to help out with programs as **Vice President**, and especially **Pat Hughes** for doing such a fine job as president over the past two years. And had he not warned me about writing monthly here this page or space might have been blank this month.

And thanks to **Mike Lloret** and **Paul Cipywnyk** for getting the newsletter out every month for so long. Most of you know that Paul our former publisher is leaving town in a matter of days and that we now have a **new publisher**, whose name I must now commit to memory. Thanks to **Morteza Mousavi** for joining us just in the nick of time. We'll do our best to make your job run smoothly. Good luck. Let's keep to those deadlines.

Also thanks to past president **Kevin Ryan** for offering to get the **newsletter** up **online** in a timely fashion. We have been running about a year behind, but Paul recently went nuts and handed over about a year of articles ready to be linked. Wow! You have to be between careers to do something like that. Good luck, Paul, and we'll be seeing you online in the newsgroups. You handled culture shock when you came here, you'll have no problem when you get back to Canada.

There really is a lot going on in the club and it is a good time for others to get more involved. I started out 5 years ago sitting quietly in the back at the meetings and decided to volunteer to send out the newsletter after realizing it was my **time to put back**. I quickly learned how to create labels and where the main post office was in Ikebukuro. Around the same time, at the suggestion of **Todd Boyle**, I had started an **unofficial public member list** so that members could stay in touch between meetings. I learned a bit about MS Access in the process.

The list was migrated over to the Internet and is now maintained by our webmasters and can be updated via a form located on our site. (<http://www.tpc.ml.org/tpc/update.html>) One thing I've been trying to do is get members to get their latest email addresses in there so we can contact them quickly in case of a change in the meeting date.

Speaking of which, there is one this month. I'm sure that a few people will show up on the first Thursday when we usually meet, but I'm going to do my best to **get the word out** so that at least all members know that the meeting is the 12th, the **second Thursday**, due to a conflict with another event at the hall.

In the time since I was doing that other stuff and now, I've spent two years as Pat Hughes' right hand man. Much of the time we have lacked a **Program Director**, so I've done what I can, but I imagine everyone is sick of me up there. I sure am. With newly-elected vice president Mike Kato and I helping I don't think there is a better time for someone to stand up and try out this position. We are out and about a lot and have lots of leads, but would really rather have someone else in charge of it all.

Speaking of out and about. Mike and I will be attending **Comdex** in **Las Vegas** this November and should be leaving the day after the next TPC meeting. We have both decided to attend the events held starting the Saturday before of the **APCUG - Association of PC Users Groups**. I went last year and learned that they have so much to offer a group like ours. We decided last week that TPC will continue its membership into next year. I think that is a smart move. Check them out at <http://www.apcug.org/>.

I'm drifting a bit here, but I'm happy to say that I have confirmed reservations with my return flight being a nonstop flight to Narita from Vegas. This flight goes twice per week and was added by **Northwest** over the summer. And can you believe it is only ¥66,000 round trip, tax included?

I'm in the process of helping/pushing our new execs get up into the **newsgroups** to discuss the future of the club. If any of you haven't seen what we have you owe it to yourself to check them out. Ask me if you need any help. It's worth the effort. A **news-reader**, with its **threading and archiving**, sure beats the pants off of trying to get things done in a group via email.

We are working on the programs for the next few months and have lots of possibilities but nothing certain yet. Suggestions are very welcome as are leads. We really want to get speakers in that have something that most of us want to hear. I, for one,

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have had enough of that guy Ken Cotton up there talking so much about Internet telephony. <g> If you don't **contact us with suggestions** you only have yourselves to blame. ;-)

You know, I'm hoping to get this off to our editor and new publisher to make their job as easy as possible this month. So I am going to end now. And if possible I will get another article in on some other stuff. Enough of club business. On with the fun! That's what it's all about. This Internet thing RULES!

See you all at the meetings and elsewhere. Hope you are getting as much out of the club now as I have been getting over the past years. I could never do enough **putting back**. Thanks.

Ken Cotton
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Thanks to some of the *Algorithmica Japonica's* “Distributors”

Over the years, the Tokyo PC Users Group and the *Algorithmica Japonica* have been fortunate to find businesses in Tokyo that allow us to leave copies of the *Algorithmica Japonica* on their premises to spread the word about the club. We'd like to thank these establishments. If you're not on this list, please let the editor or publisher know. If you'd like get on this list, and let us leave a dozen or more copies at your business every month, let us know. Thanks from the TPC Users Group! P.S. We'll include this list in the newsletter three or four times a year — or more — as space allows.

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The American Pharmacy



Ex-Prez Sez

A Message From Ex-President Pat Hughes

Wandering Ex-Prez...

This time I am writing while sitting in a bar in **Toronto** listening to an old friend of mine playing some good tunes while I enjoy a pint of **Guinness**. Actually, his partner teaches **English** at a language school and when the students come in it is almost like being back there with three young ladies from **Japan** and **Korea** at the table and a mixture of people from other countries all around.

I should have written this on the airplane and tried to get the article in on time for the new deadline (15th of the month) but the movies were better than expected and I just wasn't too inspired after the bus, ferry, bus ride from Dublin to London. Another excuse is that I had hoped to type not 'write' but in the bar I ended up using pen and paper. It is a bit strange - I really miss the backspace key as well as cut'n paste! But I have yet to buy a notebook so...

Internet Cafes

No notebook means using friend's computers when possible or internet cafes when it isn't. I didn't see the prices in **Denmark** but after paying ¥500 in **Japan** (**T-Zone** in **Akihabara**) for one hour I was surprised to see it was more expensive in **Ireland** (¥900 to ¥1000) and even more in **Toronto** (¥1,400). Admittedly I only found one place so far in **Canada** but was rescued by the local library. The access there is limited to 30 minutes at a time for a maximum of 60 minutes per day - even when the computer is not in use!

The most interesting combination I've seen yet was **Australia** where the library didn't limit you're time but charged ¥500 per hour. In the meantime Japan wonders how it can catch up with the world in the technology race but has no computers available in its libraries (not in my old local ones anyway).

Newsgroups

No notebook also means that every time I look at the newsgroups on the the TPC site (www.tpc.ml.org for those who forgot) I get all the messages available instead of having the ones I've read filtered out. A minor distraction but... another point is that I don't get the clubbizz newsgroup without making changes to the machine I use

so I usually skip it. I will have to go back to using the mailing list (once I get my account cleaned up a bit).

Another drawback to using a public computer is when you find one that has been set up with security in mind: no DOS Shell; no access to the **HD** through **Explorer** and; no "Run..." in the Start menu. Very well done I must admit — except that I wanted to use some of these alternatives! Oh well, better than having someone come in and wiping out their computer.

I did get into some of the newsgroups on the TPC site and I was impressed to see how the site itself is undergoing some changes - good job guys! Congratulations to Ken and the new VP Mike. Hope that Mike will do as VP as Ken did — though that will be a tall order and I wish him luck!!

Other topics caught my attention but I can't access them now to refresh my memory. I was unable to add my comments to what I read because the e-mail facility that should have let me send answers was not set up properly. But I will try to get on there more often and make comments once I get a notebook or...

IBM's New Portable coming out in 1999!

If you haven't heard or seen pictures (on the web or in the *Japan Times* a month or more ago) the computer fits into your pocket and the screen is like half a pair of see-through wrap-around glasses. Interesting look and I think the input is via voice though there may have been other alternatives available. Of course none of this will hit the market until next year and I do not want to wait that long but for those crowded train rides when you want to catch up reading e-mail this could be good. How many people would have predicted people walking around wearing earphones and even headphones for their walkmans?

If the eye-piece/screen does not look too strange it would also be useful for when I am travelling. Somteimes I have felt strange pulling out my **Zaurus** so the idea of using a notebook that is worth more than all my other gear (including passport) might give the wrong person an idea about financing their own travels. <g>

Mailstart vs Hotmail's Popmail

I mentioned before how useful www.mailstart.com was for accessing your ordinary account (at **GOL** for me for

example) without having to make major changes to the computer you are temporarily working on. I am beginning to get tired of the slowness of the program and the fact that you can only delete one message at a time from the list and then wait for the page to be regenerated.

I had noticed that **Hotmail** had a similar Popmail access function and tried it out yesterday when **Mailstart** wouldn't run on the library's computer. I was very happy to see that Hotmail would list up the messages from my GOL account just like the usual messages. This allowed me to select 20 messages and delete them all at once. (I can't get off a rather interesting but busy mailing list so I try to dump quickly what looks boring - 70% - before the GOL account overloads. What is interesting is that when I unsubscribed I was told I was not on the list therefore they could not unsubscribe me - and this message came along with 15 others!).

Now for the bad news: out of over 400 messages in my **GOL** account (including a couple saying "your account is getting full" <g>) **Hotmail** only listed up about 40 of them. Despite having gone through all of those and deleted most it will not list up any more messages. Next time on the computer I will have to sort this out because I am sure there are newer messages awaiting me. In fact today when I got **Mailstart** working I could check newer messages but I was back to the slowness of this utility so I'll do more at another time. Probably when I get to my brother's place and can stay on for hours at a time for no cost. This is one thing I do appreciate back in Canada — local phone calls are included in the monthly fee as opposed to Japan where you pay by the minute.

First Cyborg

One interesting thread running on that list that I can't get off is about a fellow who had a chip inserted in his arm: doors open and close as he comes and goes; lights go on and off as he approaches and leaves and; any computer he logs onto recognizes him immediately. (I haven't read the article in a few days so I think that all of that is true but if I exaggerate I apologize.)

This guy may sound like the ultimate computer nerd but in fact he performed this 10 day experiment not only to see how it would work but also to bring awareness to the Big Brother aspect of the idea. While it could be very handy for handicapped people or those who don't want to open doors (or can't remember to turn off lights) it does also bring up the idea of someone tracking your every move.

There was mention in the thread by the way that this was not actually the first time it had been done but the press paid more attention to this fellow so he is more famous. Either way it will be interesting to see how this develops in the very near future.

Revenge via the net

This has to be the strangest bit of e-junk-mail I've received yet. This fellow asks you to send the particulars of anyone who has really annoyed you and they will get revenge by sending a box of... well, you can guess I think. It's the kind of stuff that in Japan you see people walking around with plastic baggies and scooping up while walking their dogs. Anyway, they will send this to your victim. I have not looked at the site yet but it just shows that there are a lot of very different ideas out there for how to use the 'net!

Enough strange stuff. A few more days in Toronto then I am off to North Bay to visit my brother before I take the Greyhound across Canada. I have allowed between 7 and 37 days to get from Toronto to my folks on Vancouver Island and how long it takes will depend upon how many old friends I dig up. I didn't have much luck finding them via the internet (even though some are in computer field) but I have had some luck with the old fashioned method of using the phonebook and asking their parents. <g>

Until next time from another part of Canada,



PatHughes@hotmail.com

Akihabara

Trip On

October 18



By Sigi Rindler(Mr. Akihabara)

Well, when I woke up at 6 AM by a loud bang, I knew that the typhoon was in full swing. A flower pot from an adjacent house was blown down on the roof of my open air garage. The rain was virtually washing the outer walls of the house in an angle of 90 degrees. This would have been the first time that an Akihabara trip has been washed out. I rushed to the office in the next apartment and wrote e-mail to the guys who had promised to come. I said that I wouldn't be there if the rain and storm was still on, but by 9 AM I was getting ready since the typhoon had gone. I would have gone anyway, since our Pakistani member, **Steven Shaik** had called me an hour before because of his long travel to **Akihabara**.

Akihabara 10:40 (in front of the station):

The first one arriving was **Daniel Scuka** from Kanagawa, followed by TPC members and regular visitors **Peter McMartin, Kenichi Hasui, and Alexandru Costescu**. Just in time before departing we were joined by **Peter Urbanec** and his wife or girlfriend **Leanne Cruickshank**. 9 people including me wasn't that bad, considering the miserable weather a few hours before. I asked everybody what they were looking for, then we started the trip.

First we went to the Sofmap shop close to the New Akihabara Center. It used to be a shop which was dedicated to the Internet, but now it carries a bit of all, including second hand items like notebooks, video and sound cards, printers, scanners, etc. New **Sony 17"/25 dot Trinitron monitors** for 49,800 yen. Nobody is cheaper considering this model. Other places sell a comparable **Mitsubishi** model for around 48,000 yen. Don't fall for the models that cost around 40,000 yen, their dot pitch value is probably 0.28. You can see the difference! Otherwise I wouldn't buy anything there since other shops have better prices.

Next was **JC-WORLD**. I have never bought more than a mouse pad with built-in calculator for 300 yen, but this time they had some interesting things. Internal CD

writers (even for re-writable media) from **Ricoh**. I already know from other TPC members that one cannot go wrong when buying a Rico, but **Steven Shaik** said that he is using the same model, and it works like a dream. The shop had two types, ATAPI and SCSI (34,800 and 35,800). Upstairs they were 1,000 less...Of course these are brand-new "old" models (4X read/2X write), but since I am not in the CD copying business, 45 minutes to one hour recording time for a flawless CD-ROM or audio CD is perfectly OK with me. I have heard about too many problems with fast CD-ROM writers. Although I saw these drives in other shops also, this price couldn't be undercut. Having Steven with me on the tour has probably saved me around 30,000 yen. Now I don't need the expensive **Plextor** gadget anymore and can use this money for something else. Besides, this CD-ROM burner can use re-writable media which is now available for as little as 980 yen per disc.

The next stop was the **V-Outlet** opposite of the Toshiba show room. This shop is usually dedicated to **Macintosh** stuff, but this on Sunday they had a variety of Lexmark and **HP** color printers (some 100% US models) for smashing prices. However, you are well advised to check the specs of these models on the Internet first. Another good point would be calling **Lexmark** whether they support these models. Many of these cheap items are so inexpensive for these obvious reasons. The warranty periods can be anywhere between 3 months and 10 months. Also make sure whether the cartridges can be purchased in Japan. Printers like these are usually collected from bankrupt companies. The outlet shops want to sell, nothing more and nothing less. The salespeople aren't very knowledgeable or talkable either. Buy the wrong model and you'll own it forever...

Next was the so called "second hand shop street". Last time I reported that Trisal had gone. This isn't the case since I went up to the 3rd floor and bought an ISA sound card (full duplex) from **Creative** for around 3,500 yen. I paid and stuffed the plastic-wrapped soundcard in my rucksack. In this building are some more interesting shops that sell second hand stuff. Check them out when you are there.

Out of the shop, hang a right, and you face the big **Laox Computer Kan**. I must have gone a bit too fast since suddenly I heard a banging metallic sound. Daniel was so friendly and handed me the soundcard that I had purchased 5 minutes before! Bloody hell, I forgot to close the rucksack... Well, I can't say anything right now, but I might have to complain about insufficient shock proofing! Last time when I fell on a slippery staircase, I had an 8.4GB hard disk for 30,000 yen in my rucksack. I didn't have the time to test this one either. Maybe I subscribe to the wrong gods or else.

It was already 13:00, so we decided to eat in a small Japanese restaurant. Daniel had the urge to order a bottle of beer and offered 100 ml for each of us. Some of the guys didn't eat and went to other shops.

The next stop was PC Bank which had gone a month ago. It has turned out that the shop has changed the name to "PC Revo", but it's still the same shop run by the Aum religion, and its flyers are printed on the same printing machine that "Za Graceful, NetBank, and probably Trisal" is using. Well, I might be wrong, but that's my own observation. LAN cards cost 1,800 yen for ISA and 2,400 yen for PCI slots. Since it was kind of crowded, I left soon. Just one block further is the "Hamburger Shop". The shop has always a few good deals. Indeed... the same LAN cards were sold for 1,180 yen and 1,280 yen. There we met the other three lost guys again. Daniel was looking for a particular router (MN128 SOHO SL10 by NTT). Here it was sold for 49,800 yen. After he left early, I found it for 1,000 yen less (PC Plaza). Since this gadget is so high in demand, further price cuts cannot be expected for the time being.

After the Hamburger shop, Daniel wanted to visit DOS/V Paradise. He walked off instead of following the leader, but then quickly changed his mind.<g>

Daniel wanted stereo headphones with a boom microphone. The shop has them for 2,900 yen with a 30-day trial CD of the voice recognition software "Naturally Speaking". It looked good, so I decided to buy one for myself. But just before I was ready to pull my wallet, Peter McMartin told me not to buy there since I could get it for 1,000 yen less at the previous shop around the corner. Thrifty as I am, I dropped the headset and dashed into the shop to find nothing! I even asked the salesman who confirmed that they didn't carry any headphones. Out of the shop and back to the other guys, looking for Peter!

In the meantime he and two others had gone, and the remaining guys were already waiting for me in front of the shop. Result: I had some calories burned but still no headset. No problem, it's not my last day in Akihabara.

Around the corner is the other Aum outlet "Za Graceful". The shop is so tiny that the salesman needed to exhibit the computer cases outside the house. From here on only 5 of us remained. Peter Urbanec is quite a computer guru (in fact, he is at the Unix level). He came in very handy when somebody had a specific question. I asked him, he told me, and I told the guy who wanted to know...who was than very impressed and happy with my great expertise!<g>

In one shop we saw this new gadget from Sony. It was a "mini laptop" from the VAIO series. The computer has a neat little video camera built in that might be ideal when using Internet telephony. Anyway, I liked it... either the computer or just my own picture. 228,000 Yen for this tiny thing is a bit stiff, however. If Sony wants to make a good business in Germany, the company would better design it with an extendable butterfly keyboard (IBM style) for German sausage fingers! I wouldn't like to type this report on its keyboard. Still, it might be handy for smaller tasks, and it is really portable.

Finally we went to a couple of shops that are not really worth to mention... except that the same keyboard adapter plugs can cost you 200 yen in one shop and 500 yen around the corner. If you have the time, spend one day for window shopping, jot down the prices, then come back again with money on another day. Note that Sunday is not exactly the best shopping day for Akihabara. A number of shops are closed, especially in the two small parts shopping centers close to the station.

Our last destination was T-Zone in the Minami Denki Building. Peter asked me where he could get books on "Perl" (programming language). I told him about the poor selection here in Japan, and especially in the reduced foreign book sections at Laox and T-Zone. I mentioned Amazon, the Internet online bookshop...


Anyway, we went to T-Zone's foreign book corner. Gee... they didn't have my favorite "Dummy for XXX" or "YYY for Idiots" series, but there were stacks of PERL books. Peter got all of the desired ones. He said that they were cheaper than in the USA! Didn't I do a splendid job, and haven't I guided you well, Peter?<g>

The last step of our tour was T-Zone's English computer section. Alexandru from Romania was looking for a laptop computer. I think he fell in love with a Toshiba model. Since it was already 4:00 PM, we said goodbye and headed home in different directions.

Because I didn't visit the outlet shop at T-Zone, I went to the bigger one close to the station. There I found a Diamond sound card (P&P) that is full duplex (important for telephony). I bought it (around 6,000 yen) because I am not so sure about the condition of the one that crashed 2 meters to the concrete floor earlier in the day. Then I was spotted by TPC member Patrick Unterlerchner who had missed the tour. He was looking for a 56,000 baud modem.

One more thing. There was a big box with "Labtec Boom Microphone Headsets with N-DAT Mics". Since they looked good and cost only 800 yen, I got one. In the wireless radio section (right to the entrance) I saw a professional German-made headset from Heller with a microphone for 22,000 yen. This one is probably for a professional radio announcer. I'll see how the 800 yen gadget performs and tell you later.

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knowledgeable people was worth every minute!

OS Moving

by Kurt Keller

Saying goodbye

Some folks of you might remember, that on my main machine, a (by now oldish) 486 DX-33 notebook, I'm happily working with **OS/2 v4.0**. I was.

OS/2 is, compared to Windows, a superior Operating System. It was 32-bit long before Windows, it has much better network support, but its big shortcoming is a lack of native applications. Me too, I was using it mainly for its superior built in networking, doing most work from the notebook over the home network and the internet on unix machines.

Multiple full screen telnet sessions with vt220 terminal emulation, once a day **Eudora Pro 3.0** in the Windows 3.1 emulation and from time to time a Netscape session using the Windows emulation. Writing for the AJ was done on in a full screen DOS session using good old TSE (**The Semware Editor**, successor of the famous **QEdit**) and sometimes some DOS programming (or rather debugging) using multiple full screen DOS sessions. That's what I used OS/2 for.

Forte FreeAgent, Adobe Acrobat, Visio, NJWin and the national railway timetable all have 16-bit Windows versions and run perfectly well under OS/2.

But I started to do more work with **MS-Publisher**, of which I don't have a 16-bit version. I recently bought **DreamWeaver**, which does not offer a 16-bit version either, and the homebanking software I use is for 32-bit Windows only. So whenever I used one of these tools, I had to do it on the Win95 desktop machine, which meant I had to do it downstairs. The notebook I can plug into the network when downstairs in the private office and also in the living room, since I have an ethernet hub in both rooms. But the desktops I can't lug around.

So finally uncle Bill seems to have won another battle. Even though the notebook can only display 256 colours and MS Publisher files or webpages don't look so nice on it, I can prepare it and only need to quickly check again on the desktop, rather than doing everything on the big machine.

A new tenant

So I set out to install Win95 on my notebook. One of my five notebook harddrives was occupied neither by unix

nor OS/2 nor Win 3.1/J. So I switched the 840 MB combined OS/2 and DOS drive for the 200 MB scratch drive and started installing Win95. As the notebook does not have a CD-ROM and I don't have a PCMCIA-SCSI adapter, some hardware trickery was necessary. It's always good to have a good stock of old adapter cards and spare parts in a box, not to mention SCSI devices, at least some of which should be external. Sure, SCSI is more expensive, but if you ask me it's worth it in terms of reliability, connectivity and ease of use.

Only 200 MB for all this, you might be wondering. Sure, no problem. Without the 27 MB demo file (which will be gone before long) currently sitting on my harddrive, I'd only have used up approximately 115 MB. And this is *after* I have installed MS Bookshelf, MS Publisher, Visio, DreamWeaver, Eudora Pro, Netscape 3, Netscape Communicator, NJWin, Adobe Acrobat and a couple of other applications.

No compressed drives, I just don't trust them. If you think about Sun Microsystems' slogan, you might get the idea: "The network is the computer." Except for the operating system itself, **Viruscan** and two applications which don't want to be networked, everything is located on the fileserver, including all the data files. Of course, I'm quite helpless without a connection to the network, but such a setup does have lots of advantages as well. (No need to be horrified, the server does not run any flavour of MS Windows, but rock stable

FreeBSD.)

Shared room

Some of the advantages of this network centric setup are easier installation and backups, shared data and hardware and savings on resources.

For many of the installations I have done for the desktop system, also using the fileserver, I now could simply make a shortcut on the notebook to the location of the application on the server and the application would run just fine. Sometimes a DLL still needed to be copied or an INI file adapted, but most of the software runs 'out of the server'. And as a bonus it only occupies disk space on the server once, not on time on each client.

There is a special area on the server for backups. All the client machines periodically do a backup of the local drives over the net to the server. So I need neither a tape drive for each client nor any tape drive switching and not even a separate tape for every machine. From each client machine local data only is being backed up to the server and the server itself, having a 4 GB SCSI-tape drive attached, does a backup onto tape periodically. One tape

per safe instead of one tape per safe and client. If two clients use the same data files or applications, these files need only be written to tape one time, because a single copy resides on the server, rather than on each client. Less time, less space, less trouble. Sure, should you ever need to restore a machine from a backup, the OS must be installed first, including network support. But it does work. I've tried it once with Japanese Win95. A non-critical error message pops up at boot, but this seems to be because of different hardware used on the target machine before and after the restore.

There is a common temporary file area and a common data area on the fileserver, allowing to easily share files. If I'm working on something on the notebook and want to check it on the desktop later, I can access it from both machines. Or if I downloaded a utility or an interesting webpage from the internet and want to share it with my wife, I can easily do so by saving it to the common temporary area. No disk shuffling, no ftp, no double downloading.

With the network, the fact that I do not have a CD-ROM drive on my notebook does not even matter. I just put the CD in a drive on the server, share it and mount it on the client machine. A couple of CD's, such as MS bookshelf, Byte on CD-ROM, the clip arts for MS publisher or the phonebook, are shared permanently on the **Nakamichi MBR-7 CD-ROM** changer attached to the server. Any client can access these CD's at any time.

But it's not only disk space, CD-ROM's and to some extent tape sharing, also the printers are connected to the server. I can easily print from the living room to either the **HP DeskJet 520** or the Japanese **EPSON PM-700C** from any client machine. No printer switchboxes needed, no printer cable switching no need for a separate printer for each machine and I even can select on which printer I want to print. Once I have migrated some service from a standalone machine to the server, I'll probably also connect the old **EPSON RX-80 F/T+** to the server for printing drafts. Ribbons are way cheaper than ink cartridges.

The network I installed is saving me quite some bucks. Less disk space, fewer tapes, no need for printer switchboxes and extra cables, fewer hassles with software installation and thus not so many cups of tea and simultaneous independent internet access from all clients using a single phone line and only one internet account.

Ok, for this setup you do need a network card in every

computer, a hub, some network cables and a server (which can be your old machine from before the last upgrade). Using **FreeBSD** and **SAMBA**, the software to implement all this is free (see *Algorithmica Japonica* February/March 1998 - *My Server dances SAMBA*) and it really is convenient. By the way, also the OS/2 setup can use this sharing just fine.

Rent is not free

Now, with my notebook also infected by Win95, I have the convenience I wanted: to have access to all things I do from both, my private office downstairs and the living room. But it comes at a price. **DreamWeaver**, for example, much reminds me of the days when I was hacking away on the legendary **Commodore 64**; doing word processing I constantly had to pause because my typing was much faster than what the computer could handle. Considering the minimum specs for DreamWeaver, a Pentium-90, and comparing it to my notebook, a 486 DX-33, this might not be surprising. However, for smaller things it is sufficient.

Another price can be expressed directly in currency. While **OS/2** offers good built in terminal emulation and good built in **TCP/IP** support, the same stuff in Win95 is either not built in or a joke. So I have to splash out on either **Reflection X** or Exceed for doing most of my work: managing unix machines.



Going back?

I don't know yet for sure, whether I will stay with this Win95 setup or go back to the OS/2 disk (which is still placed nearby). Another possible solution would be to buy a new, more powerful notebook. But it hurts in two places:

A decorative border consisting of several yellow pencils with pink erasers, arranged in a slightly curved line around the central text.

Contributions Welcome!

Write an article or review, send a drawing, upload a graphic, or forward something you downloaded from the Internet. If you're not sure how to contribute, or want to talk it over first, call or fax the Editor, or email him. See the inside cover for contact numbers. If you write an original article, it'll also be posted on the WWW!

the heart - my current notebook is still running perfectly well and I got so much accustomed to it

the wallet - a new notebook cries for deep pockets

Removable Storage

By Roland Hechtenberg

When I bought the **Panasonic DVD-RAM drive LF-D100** together with the upgrade to **Windows 98**, I didn't know that there still was no driver for Windows 98 available, and accordingly I didn't install Windows 98 until a driver became available at the beginning of this month.

The **Panasonic DVD-RAM drive LF-D100** can read and write DVD cartridges of nominally 2.6 and 5.2 GB and PD cartridges of 650 MB, and it can read DVD-ROM and various flavors of CD-ROM. As I have been asked frequently about the speed, I decided to run a comparison test between the Zip drive, the **Nomai (super SyQuest)** drive, PD, Jaz drive, and the DVD drive.

As the Zip drive has the smallest capacity, I decided to use a file of 80 MB for the test. Files of this size can be obtained quite easily by copying a longer music track from a CD to the hard disk as a wav-file. I used the Send command of Explorer to copy the file and stopped the time with a stopwatch. When I started copying to the Zip drive, the indicator nearly immediately advanced to about 50% and the remaining time was indicated as 10 sec. Within one minute, the remaining time increased to 10 minutes, where it stayed for about 10 minutes, and then a message indicating that the file could not be copied appeared.

With the second try, the initial behavior was the same, but the file was copied successfully in 12 minutes and 19 seconds. Next, I tried the Nomai drive with a 540 MB cartridge. Here also, the indication initially was only 10 seconds, which rapidly increased to 10 minutes, but the file was copied in 43 seconds. Then I tried copying onto a PD cartridge with a capacity of 650 MB, which took 3 minutes and 13 seconds. Copying onto a Jaz cartridge with a capacity of 1 GB took 1 minute and 6 seconds. Finally I tried copying to DVD cartridges. As mentioned above, DVD cartridges are available in two sizes, 2.6 GB (where the disc can be removed from the cartridge for playing in a DVD-RAM) and 5.2 GB, where each side has a capacity of 2.6 GB and the cartridge must be removed and turned upside down to

use the other side.

Depending on the format, the actual capacity of the cartridges is different. When the cartridge is formatted with FAT16 (FAT32 so far is not available), the actual capacity per side is 2 GB, while it is 2.3 GB with **UDF (Universal Disc Format)**. Cartridges formatted with FAT16 are more suitable for many smaller files, while cartridges formatted with UDF are better for large files. Copying a file of 80 MB to a cartridge formatted with UDF took 2 minutes and 12 seconds, while copying to a FAT16 cartridge took 3 minutes and 13 seconds. For comparison, copying the same file from one hard disk to another took 27 seconds.

And now a look at the media prices.

While I could get Zip cartridges for 999 Yen at BuyKing last week, the general price still seems to be around 1500 Yen. For the Nomai cartridges of 540 MB, I paid about 5000 Yen. PD cartridges with 650 MB now are down to 1300 Yen and sometimes even can be found for

1000 Yen. Jaz cartridges with 1 GB still are around 13,000 Yen. DVD-RAM cartridges with 5.2 GB (effectively 4.0 or 4.6 GB) have a list price of 4000 Yen, and I already bought some for 3500 Yen including tax.

The approximate prices for (external SCSI) drives are as follows.

Zip	17,000 Yen
Nomai	30,000 Yen
(with parallel port adapter)	
PD	40,000 Yen (with 24x CD-ROM)
Jaz	50,000 Yen
DVD-RAM	< 80,000 Yen (with 20x CD-ROM and PD)

In regard to bang for the buck, I consider the Nomai drive an excellent buy when you want to run programs from the drive and when you want to transport data from one computer to another, as it has a parallel port

adapter, and the media are cheaper than those for the Jaz. The drive also takes the older 270 MB SyQuest cartridges, but it has the disadvantage that cartridges are difficult to find.

For backup purposes, I think that the DVD-RAM drive offers most for the least money. While the drive itself is expensive, the media are cheap and reliable, you also can use it as a DVD-ROM reader, a CD-ROM drive, and a PD drive, and it offers direct access unlike a tape drive. A program coming with the drive offers automatic copying of specified files (or directories), another program offers automatic execution of programs when the cartridge with the respective program is inserted, and you also can copy music CD tracks to PD or DVD cartridges for playing through the computer.

For me, the Zip is too small and too slow, while the JAZ is too expensive. I use the Nomai drive to run games with which I don't want to clutter my hard disks, and I



Ionic Column *in exile*

Englishman David Parry lived in Tokyo from 1980 to 1994 and was a member of TPC from 1986. Currently based in Düsseldorf and working as a translator, he returns to Japan electronically via the Internet. A frequent contributor to this publication, he was Newsletter Publisher from late 1988 to early 1990 and began the Ionic Column in 1992. For reasons best known to readers, this column even won a prize and an honorable mention...

The *Ionic Column* is now back to normal after taking over most of the September AJ and going to Cologne for the October issue. I can now return to the inner world of my PC and the machinations of Windows 95 and 98, which I am sure you would all rather read about instead of boring tales of air-brushed naked women. After all, I was under the impression that AJ readers prefer nerds to nudes.

This Ionic will deal with Windows 98 and some related topics, but at this point I will try to give a helping hand to the new publisher by suggesting that this is a topic which many others could discourse on, and more knowledgeably than myself at that. Why not put your thoughts on paper and send them in to Mike Lloret for publication? [*An excellent idea, David. Thanks for the suggestion to our readers. — Mike*]

Over the past two months a number of the pieces for my PC jigsaw puzzle have been put into place. A move of office meant that that ADSL system had to be reinstalled, this being combined with some nifty wiring so that the two PCs are networked together with the same 10BaseT wiring that also goes to the ADSL wall socket. In theory I can surf the Net from either PC, but I plan to use only the one that is directly connected so that I can use Web utilities such as **Web Whacker** and avoid the problem of files being split between two PCs. That is already a problem with text files, although judicious use of **System Salamander** to copy files between PCs solves the problem.

The networking solution is not 100%. I can in theory run programs off the other PC, but sometimes Windows gets confused and cannot find vital files for the program in question. I also avoid calling up files in WinWord from either a floppy or the network, simply because the "memory", the list of files previously opened, causes problems if WinWord tries to access the drive again. This always gave trouble after

loading a file from a floppy. I don't know why WinWord does this, and it does not do so if you reload WinWord again.

Another issue would be splitting saved e-mail over two PCs. As it is, I am considering whether to collect my mail through **Outlook Express** rather than **Com-**

puServe. I already do this for **T-Online** mail, since the T-Online interface is little more than prettified ASCII and is glacially slow into the bargain. The consultant set up my system so that both CompuServe and T-Online are dialed. At the moment I simply set it running, cancel the CompuServe connection and continue with the T-Online connection. Outlook Express sends and receives

e-mail at great speed, bypassing all the startup screens and time-wasting on-screen junk so that the entire job is done very quickly. E-mail downloads from T-Online via Outlook Express are much faster than e-mail from CompuServe in the usual way, using the **ISDN** connection for both. I don't know if this is to do with Outlook Express or T-Online or CompuServe.

One option would be to put all e-mail from both sources into Outlook Express. I am making more use of T-Online instead of CompuServe to avoid the charge per Internet e-mail item, which adds up now that the list servers are more active. But if I do that, I will have to back up all my e-mail very carefully, because it is all too easy to wipe out all the Outlook Express files. And I mean all of them, including your old e-mail.

Making light work of icons. There is one problem with Windows 95 and 98. It integrates the removal and installation of programs into one sub-program. This reminds me of the much-touted integration of home and garden in Japan, and all I can say is that a few bugs can creep into the virtual house as well. Selecting the wrong menu item can have drastic results, rather like the Far Side cartoon of the nerdy boy in an airliner with the switch on his seat saying "Wings fall off / Wings don't fall off". I felt like that on a recent flight to England, frantically squeezing to the other side of my seat and squinting at the symbols on the buttons to operate the reading light. One error would summon an ever-smiling hostess (needless to add, I was not flying **Aeroflot**), change the audio channel or reprogram the on-board GPS, as far as I could tell. This was like trying to decipher Windows icons.

The sound and the fury

This installation and removal is part and parcel of the installation routine. A new installation of Windows 9x deletes from your disk those modules that you deselect in the installation, whereas Windows 3.1 just installed the new items that you chose. In other words, Windows 3.1 is incremental, whereas Windows 9x starts from scratch each time and removes surplus programs. This was an unexpected and unwelcome feature when I overlooked the warnings. I wanted to install **Character Map**, which seemed to have been overlooked in a previous installation, and I deselected several of the items to make the installation quicker. A big mistake. My newly-installed Outlook Express vanished with no more trace than a message saying that all files and old e-mail were being deleted. This raised my blood pressure a few points as I reviewed the ancestry and future fate of **Bill Gates**.

Back from the dead

Luckily there is a way to recover both your files and your composure. A reinstallation magically brings back all the old files and settings. All except the address book, which I could not locate — and still cannot. None of the

files in the Outlook Express directory have suitable names or dates, so where is it squirreled away?

I had to rebuild the address book, which was not much of a problem at that stage, and found that there is no way to export the CompuServe phone book. I initially had considerable problems importing the phone book from **Win CIM 2.6** on my Windows 3.1 partition into CompuServe 4.0 in the Windows 98 partition. The main problem turned out to be that the default directories offered were wrong. Outlook Express can import phone books from Netscape and other sources, but CompuServe refuses to import or export anything, as their technical support people confirmed. Amazingly, there is not even an option to print out the phone book.

CompuServe 4.0 vs. Win CIM

CompuServe 4.0 seems more robust than the older program, which frequently needed to rebuild the index for the saved e-mail. This is now stored in one huge file instead of hundreds of little files in sub-directories, which is easier to back up as long as you have a Zip drive or the like. Otherwise, I find Win CIM much easier to navigate and to understand. Windows 95 has a file handling interface that is both easier and harder to understand, being more visual, but the main problem is that it is horribly coy about letting you know which drive you are on until you mouse around. No doubt they felt they had to be Californian and use terms like folders instead of directories, or "Send" instead of "Copy", and use cutesy graphics wherever possible. The same lack of directness applies to saving files within CompuServe 3.0 and 4.0.

Saved in limbo

It is all too easy to save incoming files into some well-buried directory, and extremely hard to find them later. This happened with incoming text files from customers, which sometimes could not be found and so had to be sent again. The Find tool is not as efficient as I would like, but it is also hard to look for a new file when you do not know what name it was saved under, or what it contained, or where it might be. Win CIM always saved incoming files in a Download directory that was easy to find, and it saved them under the original file name. With Outlook Express and CompuServe 4.0, I can never feel quite sure that the file that has been received is safe until it has been saved into the one of the directories I reserve for text files. Incoming files seem to go into a strange limbo of files that have been received but not saved in a form that can be located. In short, I like the speed of Outlook Express, but wish that it had the ability to preview mail if I am looking for just one specific message or uploaded file. Just remember that it is a very good idea to back up your saved e-mail and the address book at frequent intervals.

The coming Millennium

This is not a Y2K problem, but a possible quirk in Windows 3.1. The PC system that I use for e-mail is divided into two partitions, one for Windows 3.1 and one for Windows 98. **System Commander 4.0** from **V Communications** keeps Windows 98 in its own corner so that it cannot trash Windows 3.1, and does not seem to cause any problems. The manual includes details on setting up **Win/V** and **Japanese Windows**, the latter being in fact a question of multiple installations of Windows 95/98 rather than anything specific to the language side. I bought a second **Matrox Millennium II** video card, also with 8 MB RAM, so that the display would be identical on the two PCs. At the moment I have an **S3 Virge** with 4 MB in that PC, which I had to replace after Windows 3.1 refused to load with the Matrox card. Could it be that there is a memory problem?

Time to update?

Do I really need Windows 3.1 any longer? About the only program that will not run under Windows 9x is the older version of **MS Word 6.0**. My main reason for keeping that would be to check the compatibility of files produced in **Office 97**, although in any case files saved in RTF format can be read by any version of WinWord. The other programs run under Windows 98, even the **Per:FORM** form generator that I use for invoicing. It was originally written for **GEM**, and then converted for **Windows 3.0**. It still works, although like quite a number of other, older programs it does not recognize long file names or long directory names that do not conform to the rules for such names in all versions of DOS prior to 7.0. The program has been replaced, but by something that has no real advantages for me.

At the moment I am considering clearing Windows 3.1 off that disk and using nothing but Windows 98. This is the PC with a 4.3 GB SCSI disk, and I could set up all that space in one partition, with three logical drives to keep things tidy, since it is SCSI. The other PC has a 6.4 GB EIDE disk, and the first partition cannot be bigger than 2.1 GB. This is a limitation of the BIOS, and I cannot get around it. I don't know whether that applies to the other partitions as well, since I have not tried making a second partition that is bigger than 2 GB yet. My thoughts at the moment are to install System Commander on that PC with partitions for Windows 98, NT, a DOS partition for older games, and perhaps **Linux**. Windows NT and Linux would be set up for me by someone who is studying them and I would regard them as experimental until I became proficient enough and had a need for them.

Thoughts on 98.

The fact that I am thinking of **Windows NT** and Linux may provide a hint that I am less than satisfied with Windows 98. My main concern is reliability. The reason that the PC with the old Windows 95 system got upgraded at all is due to the fact that it twice destroyed itself and required a full reinstallation, and on the second occasion I installed Windows 98 instead. It seems more reliable than Windows 95 and has not had one of these self-immolating crashes yet, but lockups are fairly frequent. As yet I have virtually no drivers specifically for Windows 98; I downloaded one from Matrox but have not installed it. However, everything seems to work as well as before.

The new installation of Windows 98 on the SCSI PC went off with no problems, barring the usual tweaking of System Commander afterwards to restore the files that got trashed by Microsoft. It's all documented in the manual. The two systems are identical in use. The BBS and the online forums are full of tales of woe about Windows 98, but my consultant thinks it is a more stable piece of software than its predecessor, and I am inclined to agree on the basis of my somewhat limited experience of both. Anyone who can comment in more detail should send Mike Lloret an article.

Time to update? Do I really need Windows 3.1 any longer? About the only program that will not run under Windows 9x is the older version of MS Word 6.0.

Unfinished business

My ADSL system seems to be down more often than not. The system settings got lost, then there was the move, and now I have had a cryptic message for the past two days to the effect that I don't have access to the server. I am keeping a separate folder for URLs that people have recommended in their e-mail postings and I shall take a look when the system is up again. It is so fast that I can quickly get through a whole collection of URLs unless the entire system is very slow, but ISDN is adequately fast for just viewing Web pages that are not too complex, or to download files of up to 1 MB in size. **Deutsche Telekom** has not sent me a second questionnaire about ADSL, and frankly I am a bit underwhelmed by the limitations of the service provided. Biggest gripe: I cannot use it to connect to T-Online, despite what I was initially told.

The other unfinished business concerns **Boomerang** from **Dictaphone**. I bought it and have installed it, but it requires **Microsoft Post Office** to be installed. This is in Microsoft Outlook, and it is not part of Windows 98. Instead, you have to get it separately, or else buy Office 97. I am working on the installation at the moment and plan to get it running by the end of the month.

Keep In Touch Between Meetings:

WWW: <http://www.tpc.ml.org/> Here you can find out about upcoming meetings and events, catch up on past meetings you may have missed, browse the AJ online, and find out about all of the membership services. (Contributors are always welcome. Mail your comments, suggestions, or interest in helping out to: tpc-webmasters@tpc.ml.org)

TPC Mailing Lists: The group continues to provide mailing lists that mirror each of the newsgroups. Send a blank message to: info-lists@tpc.ml.org to receive a catalog of the current lists and complete information on how to subscribe.

TPC Newsgroups: The group runs its own private news server that you can access over the internet from anywhere in the world. There are newsgroups for everything from help requests and Windows troubleshooting to non-computer topics like movies and dining around Tokyo. You can set up your newsreader to point to news.tpc.ml.org or visit <http://www.tpc.ml.org/tpc/newsgroups.html> for a "no-setup" way

This Month's Cover...Stuart Woodward says:

Stuart (stuart@gol.com) says, "I was looking at some photographs and wished that **PaintShop Pro** had the line drawn picture effect that **Mattise**, the program I used to use to make the covers, had. I experimented with **PSP** and managed to find the right combination of filters and **Image Arithmetic** to make the effect that I wanted. The picture of Paul originally was the image at: <http://www.tpc.ml.org/tpc/execpics/>

TPC Monthly Meeting: At the Tokyo Union Church

From Omotesando station, take exit A1. When you reach the street, with the Hanae Mori Building on your left, continue downhill to the Tokyo Union Church on the corner of the third side street. Turn left at the church and use the side entrance inside the carport. Take the stairs down to the basement to the meeting room.

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