Black Magic

Issue #1
November 7, 1991

The monthly newsletter for the Princeton Next User Group.

Hello! Welcome to the first meeting of the Princeton NeXT User's Group during the '91-'92 school year. We have quite a few things planned for the group this year, but we would like your input as well. Please let us know if you have any comments, suggestions, or flames.

This newsletter, *Black Magic*, has two main goals. The first is to let you know what happened at the last meeting, in case you missed it. If you are wondering why this section is not in this issue, go back to the first paragraph again. The second purpose is to let you know what is happening with NeXTs on the Princeton campus. If you have a project that you think may be interesting for this column, just let one of the officers know, or if you are truly ambitious, write a short article describing your work.

Black Magic will **not** provide you with information you can easily obtain from other sources. We can't publish faster than netnews, so we won't try. We **will** publish anything that we think is of particular interest to the Princeton NeXT community.

And what is the User Group itself for? It is to bring NeXT users together to exchange ideas and work. We already have several items in the NeXT User Group directory–

~jeffblum/NUG/pub

Check it out sometime, and feel free to add to it. Just send me mail about what you have added so I know where my quota has gone. Thanks! The group can use its leverage to put together bulk orders of equipment such as floptical disks; it can arrange for product demonstrations; it can help its members in contacting NeXT directly.

Now onto a little more business. We have stated a few of the group's goals. Notice we say group. We need people to help us accomplish these goals. We would like to know if you can volunteer any time to the organization. We need people to do everything from manage the group's money to help post fliers. Even an hour a month would be a help.

We also intend to teach small classes on using different NeXT applications. If you have particular experience in a certain program and would like to teach or develop materials, we feel this would be an excellent service the group can provide.

On the other hand, don't stand for something you don't like in the group! Complain! We need to know what our members want before we can work on organizing it. Don't like the newsletter? Want to watch the Simpsons *and* make the meetings? **Tell us!**

Enjoy the first meeting, think about what you would like, and look forward to the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 5. We are working on getting a speaker from Ariel Corporation, a local company that makes music and sound equipment for the NeXT. Later!

Jeff Blum
President, PNUG

The Princeton NeXT User's Group:

- Monthly meetings
- Industry speakers
- Software demonstrations
- Campus news
- Black Magic
- NeXT application courses

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NeXT Computers at Firestone Library

While the largest concentration of NeXT computers can be found in the Computer Science Building, a growing number are popping up in the E-Quad, Fine Hall and in students' rooms. Near the end of the summer, Firestone Library aquired about 24 NeXTstations and a NeXTcube, making it the home of one of the largest groups of NeXT computers outside of the CS Building.

The newly aquired NeXTs come as part of a long term office automation project at Firestone. According to Phil Menos and Marvin Bielawski of the Systems Office at Firestone, the library was looking into new computers to replace their aging Wang system. After evaluating several platforms including the Macintosh, the PC (with Windows) and the NeXT, the library selected the NeXT as their platform of choice. When asked on what criteria the library based their selection, Mr. Menos identified ease of use, availibility of business applications, connectivity to the Internet, and cost as considerations. Both Mr. Bielawski and Mr. Menos, however, stressed that ease of use was the key factor.

The NeXT was able to deliver in all of these areas and offered several advantages not found on the other two platforms.

The library staff was very impressed with the NeXTstep interface, especially its "professional look" and "seamless integration" of applications.

Mr. Menos also mentioned the importance of being able to access various databases that reside on the Internet. The library uses Communicae, a third-party terminal emulation package, to access such databases as rlin and Carlylse. With the NeXT's multi-tasking ability, Mr. Menos pointed out the convenience of having two connections open simultaneously. This allows, for example, a user to find an entry in Princeton's own database as well as a remote one and check for discrepancies.

A project that is underway is to make the Oxford English Dictionary available to library users. Current plans are to have an additional NeXT configured to run X-Windows with the Mouse-X program.

At this time, most of the stations are in the offices of department heads. The library staff began with just using the bundled software, such as Mail, Digital Webster, and WriteNow. In addition to these applications, the library is using WordPerfect and Lotus Improv. The library is also experimenting with DataPhile and "the more enterpising people are exploring Create," comments Mr. Menos. One unexpected bonus was the NeXT's faxing capabilities. Although the library staff did not anticipate the need for a computer that could send and receive faxes, this feature has become indispensable.

Both Mr. Menos and Mr. Bielawski gauge the reponse to the new computers as extremely positive. "We have one Mac fan and another DOS person who are both impressed enough that they will give the machines more time," says Mr. Menos. While the use of the NeXT computers is still in its initial stages, both Mr. Menos and Mr. Bielawski look forward to incorporating the computers in other areas.

Help name the group!!!

We admit it. The name Princeton NeXT User Group is plain and boring. We need a stylish, flashy, Politically Correct name. Send your suggestions to one of the people on the first page, and although we cannot promise anything, there may be a NeXT T-shirt in the offing for the suggestion that is used... (Zowee!)

The NeXT meeting:
(Tentative — email us beforehand to make certain!)

December 5, 1991
Small Auditorium (Rm. 105)
Computer Science Building,
Princeton University

Speaker TBA