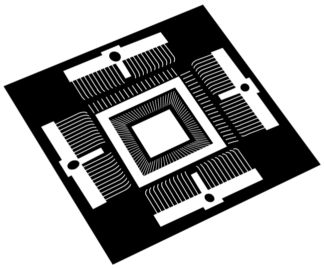
MiamiNUG Newsletter *Volume One Number 1 2 October 1991*



MiamiNUG Newsletter *Volume One Number 1 2 October 1991*

Miami Next User Group
P.O. Box 588
Miami, FL 33133
(305) 854-8954
e-mail: mgilula@miasun.med.miami.edu
C8Q10C5M@umiami.IR.Miami.EDU (rob wilson)

Our NeXT User Group, MiamiNUG was allegedly founded in December 1990 by Marshall Gilula and Rob Wilson. A new graduate of the NeXT Developer Camp who heads Life Energies Research(mg) and a third-year University of Miami Law student(rw) were the founding members. So far, all our other members are either students, faculty-academicians, or computer professionals, including one commercial pilot with UNIX training. Our group is usually still less than twelve, however we are absolutely maniacal about having the insanely great machine. We also try to do more during our meetings than just patting each other on the back. Crucial issues for collaborative involvement during our first few meetings were Uninterrupted Power Supplies (since Florida Power and Light is usually not the hacker's friend) and the ramifications of handling NeXTMail over traditional e-mail nets such as the Internet. Well, problems with electrical surges never go away in Florida and UPS devices are much in demand. And despite excellent how-to advice in the Fall '91 NeXTWorld, UUCP is still a bear to configure for some of us. So FPL and NeXTMail still remain as important issues. The newsletter is a way of possibly providing a little more coherence within the MiamiNUG and hopefully some miniscule original contribution to the NeXT community.

This issue introduces the MiamiNUG and features a brief thoughtful query about the length of the cord that goes between the beloved Megapixel display and the keyboard.

Most of the NeXT developers and users I know really enjoy the crispness of the image on the Megapixel Display. My friends with NeXTStation Color monitors say that the image is just a little less crisp than on the monochrome display. At Developer Camp in Redwood City with a whole room of Cubes (but not quite a

Zilla unit), I could scan the room and see dozens of heads within a foot from the screen. For extended periods of time. Occasionally, someone would grab the keyboard and roll backwards in the chair, and sit at a more detached distance from the Megapixel Display. Some informal research I did convinced me that more of us need to sit at a greater distance from the monitor because of electromagnetic radiation that some researchers feel is associated with the development of leukemias and other cancers. When I used a magnetic field generator to guide my distance from that crisp display, I learned that I had been (as usual) sitting about one foot or more closer than advisable. One immediate modification of the NeXT system suggested by this finding (if it in fact is not specious) is that **the cord going from the back of the keyboard to the monitor needs to be at least twice as long** (in its coiled state) as it now is furnished "out of the box." No huge expense, but it might facilitate getting some of us to sit back a bit more from the screen. *Mail Steven_Jobs@NeXT.Com: Dear Steve: Thanks to your vision and a lot of work, NeXTStep is powerfully assisting me in becoming an insanely great protohacker/developer. Will you please help me to avoid increased risk of leukemias and other cancers from the VDT I love so much by at least doubling the coiled length of the Keyboard cord? -73- With admiration and respect, mgilula@miasun.med.miami.edu.*

Many good consumer-oriented articles in the Macintosh literature have explored fairly well the relationship between VDTs, "radiation," and untoward clinical effects such as eye problems, headaches, and problem pregnancies. One neurologist I know insists that he can induce a series of classical migraine headaches by spending more than 6 hours a day in front of his color monitor. Health concerns above and beyond the mere physical inactivity of the monitor-human trance are as much of our ecology movement as any other environmental concern. Fields are no less important than oil spills just because fields are less visible to the naked eye. A recent electronic toy called the POWER PET [Safe Computing Company, 152 Milk Street, Boston, MA 02109. 1-800-638-9121, Mr. George Lechter, President] was sent to me by a surgeon-researcher friend of mine, E. Stanton Maxey, M.D. Ed is a multitalented surgeon and pilot who is fond of Dr. Robert O. Becker's book, <u>Cross Currents.</u> He talked at length with me once about how the book describes the wide variety of effects that electro-magnetic fields can have on the living being. Dr. Becker is the Syracuse VA orthopedic surgeon who has experimentally regrown limbs in salamanders using D.C. stimulation, and he believes that power lines are associated with depression and suicides in susceptible individuals. Ed also reminded me of the September 2, 1990 Harry Reasoner report which detailed a Boeing employee with leukemia receiving $500,000 in court because the company allegedly knew of the EM radiation in its plant but did not in any way inform the workers or take any measure to protect them.

Ed believes there is strong evidence that "60 Hz magnetic fields in excess of 2.5 milliGauss are linked to a heightened incidence of leukemia, brain tumors, and prostate cancer. How does one determine if such fields exist? Since computer monitors radiate 60 Hz magnetic fields I was mainly concerned as to exposure from this source. The question led me to seek out and help in an advisory role in the development of a simple detector. One has but to press a button and an LED will flash red in fields of 3 milliGauss or more, green in fields of less than 1.5 milliGauss, and alternating red-green in fields of 1.5 to 3 milliGauss." The detector that Ed was using runs on a nine volt battery, and has a small red thumb switch and a single LED installed into the top of a white plastic case. The rectangular lid on the bottom of the case snaps off easily to reveal the battery, PC board, and the red and black wires to the battery cap snap. It made me uncomfortable to check out all the expensive black pieces of equipment around the MegaPixel Display. Then the MegaPixel Display itself made me really uncomfortable. In order the comply, really comply with the safety suggestions [stay at 1.5 milliGauss level], I had to lean far backwards in my chair and put myself at what felt like an awkward arm's length from the monitor. My friends who have used the POWER PET usually have mixed feelings about ever becoming involved with it because of the uncomfortable questions and issues that using the device often raises.

Ed said that it was simple to calibrate the POWER PET using the Biot-Savart Law that he located in his 1945 physics book. I have always admired researchers who do not need five or six figures from a foundation to be able to get the answer to a question.

APPLE AND IBM VALIDATE THE NEXT department. on 2Aug91, Mr. John Sculley was quoted in USA TODAY as saying, " Object-oriented software is the heart of a new generation of software that will be developed jointly by Apple and IBM Corporations. Executives don't expect the new software to be developed for at least three years." If that doesn't validate the direction that NeXT is going in, I don't know what does. Of course, the other comment heard from certain Macintosh evangelists is that the engineers from Apple and IBM will never be able to communicate or really understand each other.

People in our MiamiNUG do both e-travel and physical plane travel. Robb Allan, who is our corresponding member from New York City, also is a founding member of GUN and has put out a stunning initial issue of **GUN Bulletin**. Rob Wilson, of Miami Law, spent the summer studying International Law in London and checked out the computer scene there. Bob Prinz, who knows UNIX and regularly flies multi-engined jets for a living, reports in from Germany and from Pittsburgh. He says that those places make him appreciate Miami more and more. Quite recently, he spoke with people from I-Link in Berlin about MIX, an entirely-in-software FAXModem with built-in voice mail features. [The July 1991 AppWrapper had a vaporous discussion by The Cube Route, Inc. detailing early development of software including "a sophisticated voice mail system, integrated

FAX and modem."] But I-Link appears to have a clearer and more definite production schedule.

I-Link from Berlin is coming out with **MIX**, which supposedly has nearly 100% in-software modem and FAX functions along with some type of Voice Mail. The product will have a minimal external box to handle line problems, but it's really allegedly nearly entirely software. The modem is slated to be 2400 bps and the FAX is at least send and probably at the same speed, but the FAX may be receive as well.The product is far enough along to have goals of presenting at computer shows in Germany by October of 1991. I-Link is negotiating with NeXTConnection currently for rights to market **MIX** in the States. Initial price estimates had a top German Price of 2,000 DM that would amount to about $550. Engineers at I-Link have indicated that the initial modem speeds would be most certainly increased in the near future.

Chip Merchants in Pittsburgh now sell 4 x 4MB SIMMS for total of $500. And this also makes the price of a single 4MB SIMM go down to $125. That's getting there! I remember (cough! cough!) when 1 MB chips were almost $200 or more APIECE.

Discounts on NeXT Computer Systems for those affiliated with institutions of higher education in the State of Florida are now being handled by the Florida State University Computer Store [tel. 904-664-7348]. Previously Emory University in Atlanta was the regional hub handling the educational market in southeast Florida. And as part of a new sales strategy to increase the visibility of the NeXT platform, Richard Miller, District Sales Manager, was showing a NeXTstation and a NeXTstation Color System at the University of Miami to interested students during the first week of the Fall term. NeXT is currently in the process of seeking an established computer store in the area to handle retail sales and support similar to their relationship with Computer Attic in San Francisco.

Books, Black Boxes, Virtual Realities, and Vapor.

Where does one fit software into B,B,V,and V? Insignia's **SoftPC** is one of the most sought-after pieces of NeXT software. Is it software, hardware, virtual reality, or a little of all? If your NeXT has the internal FD, chances are that you are going to be very happy with this parsimoniously-designed and well-packed hardware-and-software-in-software. If you have an added-on, SCSI-controlled FD, there may be software problems with PC programs that are copy-protected. The problem of disparity in function with the FD is one that the engineers will likely do something about, if their engineering and programming expertise is anything at all like their telephone customer service, which was quick, incisive, and courteous. The manual is a bit like an IBM manual in format (surprise), but more than adequately goes through the procedures necessary to get "up and running" on an AT-series deep within the RAM of a NeXT. The entire manual, however, is included online, within the "Open as Folder" option. When considering the vast amount of PC software alone, SoftPC has lots of obvious reasons for popularity among NeXT owners.

Adobe's **Type Sets I and II** contain some highly interesting alternatives to the considerable amount of individual font variation that comes with the NeXT. The manuals are pure NeXTStep and well done. Installer packages function flawlessly, and fonts variation includes at least two visually pleasing script fonts, FREESTYLE SCRIPT and PRESENT SCRIPT are interesting and break the monotony of the usual fonts. Typefaces such as COTTONWOOD, **LITHOS-BOLD**, and JUNIPER make for enhanced design in numerous graphic dimensions. All the fonts can be downloaded to non-NeXT PostScript printers.

MacinDisk is the name of an under-thirty (dollar) utility that allows the "reading only" of a 1.44MB Macintosh FD. Released only this month, MacinDisk is astounding because of its adherence to NeXTStep, and because is less than one-sixth the cost of another Mac FD reading and formatting program. The author, Bill Roth, can be reached e-mail at bill@psl.wisc.edu and he has provided UUCP-mediated as well as telephonic [1-800-822-3385] ways to purchase the software at an incredibly low price. When I saw MacinDisk, and had a chance to correspond with Bill, I thought, "Shades of Raymond Lau!" But Bill, who started out with a TRS-80 in 1980 when he was 15, is no *enfant terrible*. On the contrary, he is a modest, mature graduate student in Computer Sciences at the University of Wisconsin with concentration areas of AI and Programming Languages. He said that Impact Software provides "license keys" over the telephone and by e-mail. In his Help Section, he says, "The 800K drive on a Mac treats all cylinders of a disk as roughly the same size. So, as the drive head moves closer to the spindle, the drive motor SPEEDS UP. ..the DOS and NeXT drives run at a constant velocity, which prohibits 800k Mac disks from being used on the floppy drives that NeXT provides." Although he says his program only works with the internal FD, he has confirmed that it will usually work with 040 Cubes employing SCSI FDs as well.

New Members.

Hey, if Guy Kawasaki can evangelize for NeXT, so can we. Of course we are open to new members throughout the South Florida area, and we are available through e-mail, telephone, or USnail as listed at the beginning of our newsletter. One of the referrals we received over the Internet is reproduced because of the attitude expressed in the letter which was likely true at the time that the letter was written, but we hope that the situation at the University of Miami has already been modified by some of our group members, and by the efforts of Richard Miller and his associates from NeXT Computer, Inc. The general gist of the following communication, however, has been found in a few places other than the

University of Miami as well.

From: gross@umiami.ir.miami.edu (Mondo)
Subject: Re: Apple and IBM close deal, replace NeXT (Was: Re: Cloned NeXTStep ?)
Message-ID: <1991Jul12.013946.11265@umiami.ir.miami.edu>
Date: 12 Jul 91 05:39:46 GMT
References: <1991Jul10.112622.22570@elevia.UUCP> <287B9286.48BC@ibma0.cs.uiuc.edu> <draphsor.679260587@medisg>
Organization: Univ. of Miami - Info Resources
Lines: 36

In article <draphsor.679260587@medisg>, draphsor@medisg.Stanford.EDU (Matt "Rollie" Rollefson) writes:
>

> NeXT in academia, however, is not quite the rosy picture that you seem
> to be suggesting above. Around here I've heard a good bit of lack of
> satisfaction with NeXT - they don't call back, they're not willing to
> deal, they don't seem to want to come to an understanding with the
> academic types. I think that a lot of this might just be dissatisfaction
> because NeXT isn't giving the computers away for free. But something
> that has to be understood is that many educational institutions never
> buy machines on their own. The big companies (IBM especially, at the
> Business School here at Stanford) give the machines away for free. If
> NeXT wants to get into that 'market', they're going to have to give some
> machines away, and I'm not sure they're financially capable of doing so.

Well here at the Univ of Miami, we got two NeXTcubes (the '030 kind). Both are dead. We called around until we had to call Calif to talk to a NeXT rep cuz none exist in Miami. We found we needed a new OD with NeXTstep on it. "Fine." they said...give us $600. Oh and that's just for the disk...we'll want some more for this speical service call and for a repair quote.

This did not sit well with our admin types you are used to getting quite a substantial amount of equipment gratis or an reduced cost from IBM, Apple, DEC, and Sun. So the current story is that we have two cubes acting as very large paperweights...and they'll probably stay that way forever.

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Jason Gross Comp Sci Ugrad University of Miami Class of '91 (?)
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Hey, wanna save the world? | Got sumtin' to say? gross@umiami.bitnet
Nuke a Godless, Communist, | Pick and choose! gross@umiami.ir.miami.edu

gay whale for Christ. | gross@miavax.ir.miami.edu
- Anonymous | jgross@umbio.med.miami.edu
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Although the wisdom of the undergraduate traditionally prevails in defining prevalent trends, we hope that Mr. Gross's observations are not as relevant three months later due primarily to the excellent NeXT demonstrations at the University of Miami that drew onlookers from the exhibits of all the other computers when a NeXTStation Color was set up by Richard Miller.. Besides, it's not just the machines in the Miami area in and around the University. It's all of the Cubes and all of the NeXTStations that happen to be networked together. And other Unix platforms. And other systems. Everywhere.

On the NeXT scene, Marble's **Teleconnect** suggests a precise ease in creating wide-ranging LANs by using just the red and green wires, a modem, and a little software. It really is **Interpersonal Computing** on a global basis. The next issue of our newsletter will review Neuron's FAX96+ and the A/D64x that is produced by Singular Solutions.