

# ZiffNET

## Monthly Shareware Review

### Issue 10 - May, 1994

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This month's ZShare takes a look at Raptor, the newest game from Apogee. And columnist Timothy Campbell brings his monthly look at the news in Shareware. Be sure to check out our special report on the sudden deluge of Windows Bar launchers. We'll help you decide which toolbar will help you cure the Program Manager blues.

For Information on how to download programs from ZiffNet, click here: [What is ZiffNet?](#)

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# ZiffNet Monthly Shareware Review



**ZiffNet Monthly Shareware Review**

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## The Newest Additions to Our Libraries

Below are listings of some of the newest files available for downloading on ZiffNet for CompuServe. ZiffNet for PRODIGY members can always find up-to-date lists of Newest Titles right on the service by selecting "Newest Titles" from the ZiffNet Software menu.

[Downloading from ZiffNet](#)

## ZiffNet Originals

### **INIBAK (INIBAK.ZIP)**

[PCMAG Utilities/Tips Forum, Library 2 \(PCMAG Utilities\)](#)

Automate the backup of your Windows .INI files.

### **DISKPIE (DISKP.ZIP)**

[PCMAG Utilities/Tips Forum, Library 2 \(PCMAG Utilities\)](#)

Graphical representation of your hard drive usage for Windows.

## Applications

### **MEGA EDIT v2.08 (MEGAED.ZIP)**

[PBS Applications, Library 7 \(WP and Text Editors\)](#)

Powerful text editor from Windows. Edit files of almost any size.

### **EDITUER v1.3 (EDITEU.ZIP)**

[PBS Applications, Library 7 \(WP and Text Editors\)](#)

A text editing utility for Windows. Shareware from France.

### **DR. FORM v3.1 (DRFORM.ZIP)**

[PBS Applications, Library 3 \(DOS\)](#)

Design your own forms with this versatile DOS program.

### **FASTFILE v5.43 (FASTFI.ZIP)**

[PBS Applications, Library 3 \(DOS\)](#)

Lean but powerful database program. Ideal for laptop users with limited disk space.

## Games & Entertainment

### **BLACKJACK v2.41d (BJEGA.ZIP)**

[PBS Arcade, Library 4 \(Card Games\)](#)

Not just a game, but a complete tutorial on blackjack strategy.

**GOD OF THUNDER v1.0 (GOT.ZIP)**

[PBS Arcade, Library 5 \(Fantasy Games\)](#)

Play the role of Thor in this interactive and graphical puzzle/adventure game.

**MORAFF'S PINBALL v7.0 (MPNBAL.ZIP)**

[PBS Arcade, Library 3 \(Action Games\)](#)

Bring classic arcade pinball to your PC.

## Utilities

**CMFILER v5.36n (CMFILE.ZIP)**

[PBS Utilities, Library 3 \(DOS\)](#)

A DOS File manager with an intuitive interface and powerful features.

**CLIPMATE FOR WINDOWS v2.09b (CLPMTE.ZIP)**

[PBS Utilities, Library 4 \(Windows\)](#)

Extend the capabilities of the Windows Clipboard.

## **How To Download from ZiffNet**

If you are a ZiffNet member on CompuServe or PRODIGY, you can easily download all of the programs mentioned in this publication. If you are not already a ZiffNet subscriber, you can find out how to join by selecting "Becoming a ZiffNet Subscriber" below:

[Becoming a ZiffNet Subscriber](#)

### **ZiffNet/CompuServe**

All of the programs mentioned in the ZiffNet Monthly Shareware Review are available directly from our Software Center (GO ZNT:SOFTLIB) or in one of the Public Brand Software Forums (GO PBS). The correct forum is indicated in each program highlight, along with the specific library in which it can be found.

### **ZiffNet/PRODIGY**

All of the programs can also be found on the ZiffNet for PRODIGY service. Simply [JUMP]: **ZiffNet** and select "Software" from the menu. Then perform a Search by Title for the program you are interested in.

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1. Set your communications software to seven data bits, even parity, one stop bit. Select a data transfer rate (bits per second) of 1200, 2400, 9600 or 14,400 baud. Have your modem call the local ZiffNet number. (To find your local ZiffNet number: By modem, dial 800-346-3247 and at the User ID prompt type PHONES; By voice, dial 800-635-6225.)

2. Respond to the prompts by entering the information below:

When you connect: Press **CTRL+C**

Host Name: **CIS**

User ID: **177000,5555**

Password: **ZIFF\*NET**

Agreement Number: **SREVIEW**

3. Register your name and credit card number for billing.

You will receive your permanent User ID and temporary Password online. Write them down and use them to log on. You will receive your permanent Password within 10 days, as confirmation of your new ZiffNet membership.

# REVIEWS

If you're a DOOM fan who has become a little bored with the three registered episodes, look no further than *DEU: The DOOM Editor*. Matt Lougee reviews this DOOM level editor that gives you virtually unlimited potential in designing your own scenarios for this popular arcade/action game. We've also reviewed *wInformant*, a collection of Windows utilities that includes a file finder and program un-installer. If action gaming is more your speed, make sure you read our review of *Raptor*, the latest game from Apogee. And Don Cosseboom looks at the strong and weak points of *NeoBook Professional*, an electronic publishing application from NeoSoft.

## [About the Ratings](#)



### **DEU: The DOOM Editor**

Create and edit new levels for this popular game.



### **wInformant**

The Windows utilities that Microsoft forgot.



### **NeoBook Professional**

Full-featured Electronic Publishing for DOS.



### **Raptor**

Apogee's latest full-color arcade game.



### **Poetry Generator**

Wax poetic with your computer.



### **PocketDPlus**

You'll never use the DOS DIR command again after you see this utility.



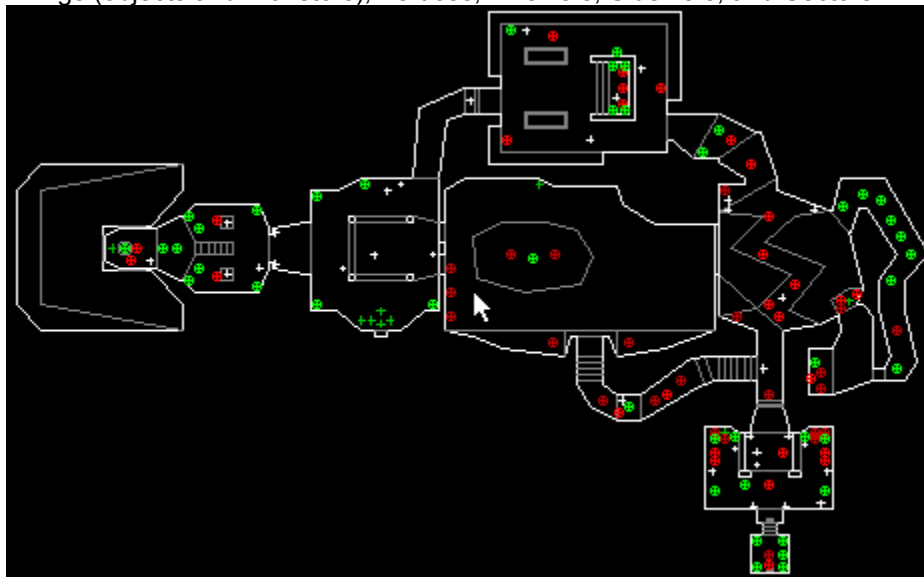
## DEU - The DOOM Editor

Reviewed by Matt Lougee

Admit it, like almost everyone else out there, you're a DOOM fanatic. But what if you can play all 3 episodes on Nightmare mode in your sleep? What do you do if you already know every inch of every level. Can there actually come a time when you might become bored with DOOM? It's a horrible thought, but one you won't have to face if you download DEU - The DOOM Editor.

There are a lot of DOOM editors around that can do a number of different things. Some that just edit the objects, some that will edit the walls and sectors. However if you want complete control over the DOOM environment then DEU 5.0 is the editor for you. DEU is one of the few editors that can edit all known aspects of the game. You can either edit existing levels or create entirely new levels.

DEU has two modes: Menu mode and Map mode. In Menu mode you can load a patch WAD file, edit level, create level, view all of the sprites or objects in the DOOM WAD file, etc. It may be a bit daunting at first but it's simple to learn in just a few minutes. In Map mode, where all of the work is done, you can edit Things (objects and monsters), Vertices, LineDefs, SideDefs, and Sectors.



Things can be edited in any number of ways. You can insert or delete any Thing anywhere. For instance you could put a Thing normally found in the 3rd Episode and put it in the 1st Episode. It's as simple as pressing the 'insert' key and selecting what Thing you want to place from a menu. Vertices are the points that connect the 'walls'. These can be inserted, deleted, or moved with the walls stretching with them. LineDefs and SideDefs are what makes up the walls. The LineDefs are what controls whether a line is impassable, 2 sided, secret, etc. These are also used to create doors and switches. The SideDefs are where you can set the texture of the line. Sectors are used to create lifts, pits, pools of acid, light and dark areas, etc. The Sectors define the floor and ceiling height and the floor and ceiling texture.

Overall, DEU is a powerful editor. The ability to create your own levels is terrific. You also don't have to worry about altering your original DOOM.WAD file because DEU uses a PWAD or patch WAD file, that is small enough to trade with you friends. But it does come with some drawbacks. The documentation is limited: simply defining commands, listing abbreviations and describing some of the special areas (doors, lifts, stairs, etc.) but does not go into enough detail to describe all of the functions and process of creating



a level. The editor is difficult to use at first but becomes easier over time. Also, there seems to be a bug in the node rebuilding routine. So that when you are playing the game there is a 'Hall of Mirrors' effect in a few spots, it looks as if the 'No Clipping' mode is on. This is easily fixed though with another utility called BSP by Colin Reed (colin@argonaut.com). There is also available a guide to DEU called "Beginners Guide to DEU" by Rich 'Blackfist' Dersheimer (CIS: 75123,1521). I found this extremely helpful while learning to use DEU effectively.

All drawbacks aside once you learn this tool the creation of levels is limited only by your imagination.



**More Info.: DEU**



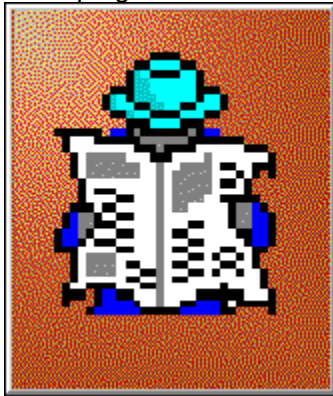
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# REVIEWS

## wInformant

Reviewed by Scott Arpajian

Windows is a slob. Files get thrown around your hard disk in a seemingly whimsical and random manner. Although program installations are a breeze in Windows, uninstalling those same programs can quickly turn into a nightmare that would give even Stephen King the chills. Some parts of a program get placed in recognizable directories, but other parts, such as .DLL and .VBX files can be placed in your Windows or System subdirectories. And because it's hard to figure out what they are or how they got there, they probably stay there, forgotten and unused, but taking up valuable disk space. Even worse, some programs will create duplicates of .DLLs and .VBXs that you already have installed.



wInformant, written by Joseph Albanese, holds the rare but important distinction of simply being a must-have utility. This program is actually a collection of utilities that includes an uninstaller, a duplicate .DLL/.VBX finder, and a file search function. Everything is presented together in the form of a single toolbar application.



The duplicate DLL/VBX finder scours your system, looking for unnecessary .DLL and .VBX files. This can be a common occurrence if you load new programs on your system regularly. Files such as VBRUN300.DLL and COMMDLG.DLL seem to propagate all over the place. What most people don't realize is that you only need one of these files, and it should be in your Windows or Windows system directory.

The search utility finds files on your system. It allows you to specify partial file names, and find all the matches. Once you've found the programs, you can run, edit or delete them.

The uninstaller is a great idea, as it allows you to remove entire programs, including their program groups and icons. Unfortunately, this is the most underdeveloped utility in the package. It frequently suggests deleting files that you definitely don't want to delete, and it has a hard time uninstalling the complete program, especially if the program has files scattered throughout several directories. Hopefully, the author will work on developing the uninstaller function, as it is clearly a major asset to the program.



**More Info.: wInformant**

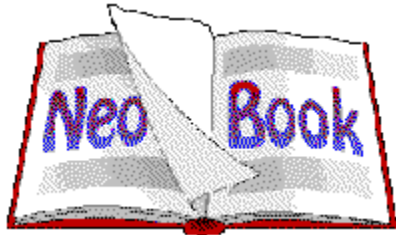


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# REVIEWS

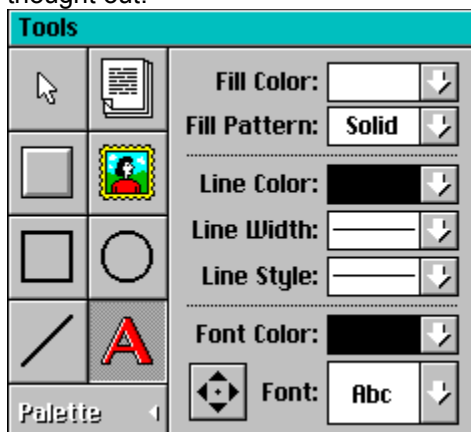
## NeoBook Professional

Reviewed by Don Cosseboom



This month I took a look at NeoBook Professional, a DOS based electronic book development system. The idea behind this technology is to provide a way for information providers to deliver their text on-line. Traditionally proponents of this technology say you might use it to deliver your company's corporate guidelines, benefit information, newsletters, or provide an informative tutorial. The Neobook people position their product as a way of making an electronic magazine or provide electronic teaching material.

To be quite honest, when I heard about the program I expected the worst. I always dread looking at any DOS program that isn't a game, I have grown spoiled by my GUI applications. However I had nothing to fear, Neobook is wrapped surprisingly in a very nice and well thought out interface. The interface is very Windows like, and it's fast. Neobook allows you to create electronic books containing imported text, graphics, sound, navigational buttons, and draw within the product. It's very easy to use and is very well thought out.



NeoBook Professional puts you on the path to electronic publishing by giving you tools to integrate pictures and sound to create disk-based newsletters, books and tutorials. It lets you paint a canvas filled with text, graphics and sound for attention-getting presentations. Software features include icons, toolbars, menus, graphic support for .PCX and .GIF formats, and sound support for PC Speaker/Sound Blaster audio. The program's point-and-click interface lets you quickly layout your pages with color, shapes and images while importing text from your word processor or typing it into text boxes or word balloons. You can polish off your work by inserting PC speaker (.SNG) or Sound Blaster (.VOC) buttons for user playback of clips. NeoBook's drawing tools add lines, color-filled squares, rectangles, ellipses

(circles and ovals), and stack objects for impressive on-screen displays. And program features like the title tool for highlights, page numbering and color fonts controls add a professional, polished look to your masterpiece. NeoBook Professional's executable program compiler and runtime license allow you to distribute and share your disk-based publication with associates, clients or students.

However, there were some things about the program that I did find lacking. The help system is really not very helpful. I would think that a program aimed at delivering information online would have a better help system. In fact it's really horrible, and I think it might have been better if they just said "read the really long text file installed in your Neobook directory". The one piece of information I was looking for was how to format text. The sample publications that are included with the software show the ability to underline, center, etc. However I haven't the faintest idea how you do this, nor does it seem to be explained in the 45 character wide help file. I don't think it's too much to expect that the help system should allow you to navigate through the information and find what you need.

Also the samples bothered me, it's clear that you can do quite a bit with Neobook. I think it would be really nice if there was one that showed you all the features of the product with one sample. Instead you have to look at four different samples, and only two really show what you are interested in. For example one of the samples shows how using a dithered palette displays high resolution GIF's better, and has sound with it. Sound however is disabled in the unregistered version. It's understandable that shareware companies do this, but to disable the sound feature but enable the ability to create standalone executable publications seems warped. I think it would be more helpful to evaluate Neobook if all the functionality worked, and the ability to deliver standalone versions of it didn't. This to me makes more sense.

The last thing I will complain about is the text handling feature. If you save a document file out from your word processor into ASCII, and then bring that file into Neobook with word wrapping turned on, it combines single lines into one line. If the word wrap is turned off, the text looks better, but your article margins have to become much larger. This isn't a big issue if you manually wrap your text for a particular width column, but it is a problem if you are bringing over text from another source.

If you are looking for a way to create DOS-based electronic books with text that is not yet written, this is the tool for you. It's very easy to use, but like any piece of software it has its drawbacks. If you have existing text that you want to import and resize, this doesn't work very well. Registration is \$45 dollars for the soundless version and \$89.95 for sound and the ability to kick off DOS executables from within Neobook. Add \$6 dollars for shipping and handling, see you next month.



**More Info.: NeoBook Professional**



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## Raptor

Reviewed by Russ Lockwood

You may not be a Top Gun, but you can certainly act like one in Apogee's latest arcade action game, Raptor: Call of the Shadows. Once again, the free world's in peril and it's up to a hero like you to save it from evil domination flying the Raptor, a futuristic jet fighter.

Though you're on the side of right, you won't have full access to all your might until you gain enough destructo points to give the Raptor jet its complete arsenal. The full weapons mix only becomes available after you shoot down enemy aircraft, strafe buildings and bomb ground targets while flying through wave after wave of bad guys. Ultimate victory isn't easy as you might think.



Raptor offers four mission levels: Training, Rookie, Veteran and Elite. The default level is the very challenging Veteran mode. For anyone who is arcade game-impaired, the Rookie level gives you the most enjoyable combat introduction since you face fewer enemies. The game's Elite level is pure mayhem, though, You'll be lucky to survive the first wave. Missions always start in the hanger, where you can amble into Harrold's Death Emporium to pick up the latest in weaponry and defensive equipment. The catch is you must have the dollars to pay for the goodies. The better the weapon, the more it costs. In the beginning, all you have to fight with are machine guns and generic energy shields.

Once you take off, the game uses an omniscient top-down view of your jet and the terrain below it. Cursor keys allow you to move the Raptor left, right, forward, and back. The view is strictly 2-dimensional--there is no up or down movement. What's more you can move in the direction of the top of the screen, only.

As you fly and move laterally, the ground scrolls beneath your jet. You meet waves of gun- and missile-firing enemy aircraft as they streak from the top of the screen using random flight patterns and speeds to throw off your aim.

Keyboard control is excellent. The cursor keys control the Raptor's movements and the ALT key cycles through your weapons while the CTRL key fires your arms and the spacebar releases the bombs.

Raptor's appeal rests on its superb graphics. The graphics simply blow away any game like it with Nintendo-style graphics. Raptor is designed with a riot of color and artistry often found only in expensive commercial game releases. The aircraft explode in fireballs filled with gradient yellows and oranges, while destroyed buildings look like blackened shells of steel and concrete structures. Best of all, the enemy aircraft all show a fine selection of futuristic designs. The characteristic shapes help you identify the most lethal craft, too.

Fact is, you'll need all the help you can get. Enemy aircraft appear first in ones and twos, then in multiples of threes and fours. The name of the game is fire and maneuver, although the latter is nearly impossible with a screen full of enemy aircraft and no where to go except backward, forward, left and right.

Strafing certain buildings results in bonus equipment and weaponry, which you assimilate by flying over the glowing afterimage. How a multi-mach fighter rearms in the middle of battle while flying a mission remains a logical mystery, but it does give you the goodies.

The same goes for downing certain enemy aircraft. Most just explode in a ball of flame, but some yield diamonds that give you extra cash. In addition, you always score destructo points (dollars) for everything you destroy.

At the end of a combat run (called a wave), a boss aircraft appears to block your exit. At this point, the

ground no longer scrolls underneath. You must stop and battle the boss, which unleashes an incredible amount of ordnance. The inability to rotate your aircraft forces you to pause between boss bursts, slide in, fire, and slide out before the boss fires again. You'll have to master these maneuvers before you can watch the boss take a pyrotechnic plunge.

After that, it's back to the hanger for rest, refit (using your hard-earned destructo dollars for more weaponry and equipment), and relaxation. Then, it's on to another wave in Bravo sector.

Raptor: Call of the Shadows is a big game file -- almost 2MB as a downloadable ZIP file. As an uncompressed file, it will take up over 5MB of hard disk space, too. At \$34.95 for the registered version, Raptor delivers first-class arcade graphics and enticing action. If you're looking for a flight simulator, Raptor isn't it, but for arcade mayhem, this is one tough bird to beat.



**More Info.: Raptor**



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## Poetry Generator

Reviewed by Ron Bel Bruno

You have trouble composing a shopping list, but you feel the need to express yourself. You feel like . . . writing some poetry. Despair not, troubled scribe, Poetry Generator will have you writing like William Butler Yeats. Almost.

Poetry Generator is an entertaining bit of inspirational software with many novel uses for writers, teachers and anyone who appreciates literature. Don't give up your day job to follow the muse immediately. First you have to put the program to work.

Poetry Generator writes using a 20,000-word vocabulary to create free-verse poems at the touch of a button--literally. To begin, you simply start the program and use its Spartan menu to tell the software to create poems with or without your name. The program uses the structure of real poems as a model for its own semi-coherent prose.

Its random creations are composed with strings of short phrases from 4 to 9 lines long. The following shows what happens when you type in the name Ron. The program also prompts you to enter the first letter of a favorite color (B).

### A POEM FOR RON

IN A STATE OF EMOTIONAL TENSION SOMEONE PRETTY LIGHTS A BLUE CANDLE AND RETURNS TO THE FUTURE  
APPARENTLY SOME OBSESSIVE TYPES REALLY DISLIKE ORGANIZED RELIGION RON IS JUST TOO TALL

This postmodern melange of nouns, verbs and adjectives just doesn't gel. Emotional tension? What careful phrasing. Such abstractions are characteristic of the program's creations. Many are quite amusing, though. For example:

### PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

WITH NO DIFFICULTY THE STATE'S KEY WITNESS SAYS LOVE IS WORTH DYING FOR IF YOU BELIEVE THAT  
SOFTWARE PIRATES SING THERE PRAISES OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF HAS HAD  
ABOUT ENOUGH OF THIS

Once again, this is hardly coherent, but it's worth a good laugh. I let the Poetry Generator work its dubious magic on about 50 different sets of verse, and there are some pleasant surprises.

### THEY'VE WORN DOWN YOUR RESISTANCE

THE MADMEN OFFER YOU EVERYTHING YOU WANT THEY DISCUSS PHILOSOPHY ALL NIGHT AND BEG FOR MERCY  
THEY'VE WORN DOWN YOUR RESISTANCE AND IT'S WRITTEN ON THE BATHROOM WALL THAT YOUR DREAMS  
HAVE ALL COME TRUE

Poetry Generator produced some prime prose here. Okay, enough sampling. The real question is what can you do with this verse machine? The author suggests just letting it write poetry for you. Here's another idea, though.

Sometimes the worst part of writing is just getting started. The rest is a matter of getting your thoughts down on paper. Let Poetry Generator take the first step. Its verse needs a lot of revision, but it can be inspirational. For example, borrow from the beginning of the poem above and finish it off with your own



words.

Use it as a brainstorming tool. Teachers can use Poetry Generator to loosen up students for creative writing and writers can use it to break a writing block. Anyone who likes to read poetry can download it for pure reading pleasure and a few laughs. It takes only \$29 to register it, too. All it needs is a free-form way to add your own prose to it.



**More Info.: Poetry Generator**



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## PocketDPlus

Reviewed by Dave Burton

PocketDPlus is one of the best file utilities available. Among other things, it is one of the most comprehensive programs available for listing disk directories. It offers various full listings and compact listings, many ways to sort and group files, bar charts displaying the file size, and many other options. You can also use PocketD to search for files and view them with a built-in file viewer, including those inside archived files (requires the appropriate archivers); copy or move files; extract archives; change attributes; delete files; backup or restore drives; and create a disk catalog. The program can be run from either the command line or from a menu. It also has network support.

PocketDPlus has a wide variety of command line options available. The menu makes it easy to quickly choose options, if you're not the type of person who likes to memorize DOS command switches. Perhaps the nicest touch, though, is that you can use the menu the first time you need a specific function and then PocketD can automatically create a batch file with all of the required switches (including parameters you might want passed). After that it's simple to call the batch file to perform the desired task. Even if you only use a few of its many options, PocketD is well worth having. This version adds some browsing options, fixes some bugs with 4DOS and OS/2, and optimizes file copying on networks.



**More Info.: PocketDPlus**



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## DEU - The DOOM Editor



### ***DEU.ZIP - PBS Arcade, Library 12 (Game Adjuncts)***

You'll never become bored with Id Software's DOOM with this level editor. DEU allows you to edit your DOOM .WAD file one level at a time, changing contents and appearance. You can move, add or remove monsters and powerups, change the wall colors and positions, and create new doors, acid pools and ceilings. You can even create a brand new level from scratch. DEU will work with both the shareware and registered versions of DOOM, but it won't allow you to save changes to the shareware version. v5.0. Bannerware, \$0. 183,676 bytes.

## Raptor



## Trophy

### ***RAPTOR.ZIP - PBS Arcade, Library 3 (DOS Games)***

Apogee's Raptor: Call of the Shadows (Episode #1) lets you take the role of a mercenary flying the super high-tech Raptor. In it you fly missions, with smooth graphic details, to knock off the top competitors of MegaCorp. Hear the Raptor's engines roar and see the wing cannons blaze with fire. Raptor comes with 4 play levels and high-quality sound support, while the game action is controlled with keyboard, joystick or mouse. It includes context-sensitive help and a self-running demo. Shareware, \$34.95. 1,930,447 bytes.

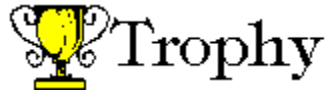
## Poetry Generator



### ***POETGN.ZIP - PBS Home, Library 3 (Home & Hobby)***

Poetry Generator turns your computer into a poet. Using a 20,000-word vocabulary, this program creates free-verse and haiku poems at the touch of a button. Poetry Generator uses the structure of actual poems as models, and the program combines random selections of words and phrases according to rules of grammar, producing verses up to 9 lines long.

## PocketDPlus



Trophy

### ***POCK.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 3 (DOS Utilities)***

PocketD Plus is one of the most complete file utilities available. It offers numerous ways to list, sort, and group files; search for files and view them, including those inside archived files (requires appropriate archivers); and perform most file-management tasks. You can use PocketD to backup or restore drives and create a disk catalog. It can be run from either the command line or from a menu. v4.0. Shareware, \$49. 164,730 bytes.

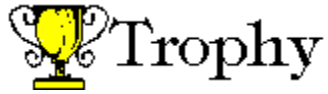
## wInformant



### ***WN4MNT.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 4 (Windows Utilities)***

WInformant is an advanced utility package with 7 powerful Windows utilities. You can check swap-file status and restart or exit Windows with one mouse click. Find files, eliminate duplicate .DLL and .VBX files, and edit .INI files. wInformant can also seek out and selectively destroy programs. There is a lot here for the new and experienced user. Registration enables multimedia sounds and disables splash screens. Shareware, \$39. 775,650 bytes.

## NeoBook Professional



Trophy

### ***NBOOKP.ZIP.ZIP - PBS Applications, Library 4 (Windows)***

NeoBook Professional puts you on the path to electronic publishing by integrating pictures and sound to create disk-based newsletters, books and tutorials. It lets you paint a canvas filled with text, graphics and sound for attention-getting presentations. Software features include icons, toolbars, menus, graphic support for .PCX and .GIF formats, and sound support for PC Speaker/SoundBlaster audio. A compiler and runtime license come with this outstanding package. v1.2s. Shareware, \$89.95. 684,984 bytes.



## Dick Bryant

*Author of WinFlash*



## Author Profile

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### **Name**

Dick Bryant

### **Computer System**

My primary system is a Gateway 2000 DX2-66 with dual 540Mb drives, a double-speed Mitsumi CD-ROM and a SoundBlaster16 card. It also supports a Telepath 14.4 faxmodem. The system is straight "stock" from Gateway and it has been my most trouble-free to date.

### **Favorite Text Editor**

For programming, I use the built in IDE editor in VB or BP7. For other text-only tasks I use NoteBook, a fine NotePad replacement by Mark Berlinger available on CIS.

### **Language/Compiler of Choice**

So far, all but my latest release have been written in BP7 (Turbo Pascal For Windows). I've recently acquired Visual Basic Professional Edition 3.0, however, and will probably use it for most projects from here on out. I find that it is very fast and easy to use, and most active shareware customers appear to have already ferreted out the required VBRUNxxx files.

### **Programming Hours**

Since I'm a part-time shareware author, my programming hours are a bit odd. I generally get in an hour or so before going to my "real" job and a couple of hours in the evening. Most "marathon" sessions occur during the day on the weekends, sometimes running until midnight. I'm not, however, a classic "nightowl" coder - I don't function well after midnight.

### **Favorite Programming Snack**

I generally don't snack while programming, but copious quantities of Diet Coke and Miller Lite are consumed, depending on the relationship of the sun to the yardarm.

### **Marital Status**

Married.

### **How Did Your Decision to Become a Shareware Author Affect the Above?**

My wife, Mary, views my pursuit of my shareware business with some amusement. She's not quite sure if putting out this much effort for so little lucre is entirely sane.

### **Last Non-Computer Book Read**

*Stewardship Of The Corporation* or some such, that my boss handed out - I don't have the exact title here. NOT recommended.

### **Other Hobbies/Interests**

My other avocation is teaching skiing. I'm also a mountain bike enthusiast.

### **Favorite Pizza Topping**

You mean there's more than one possible answer? Anchovies, of course!!



## Biography

---

Born and New Hampshire and educated at MIT, Dick Bryant probably had no idea that one day he'd be moonlighting as a shareware author. Dick got his degree as an electrical engineer, and staked out a solid career. He's currently Vice President of Advanced Technology and Tools at Ford Microelectronics,

Inc.

But the world of circuit boards and microchips wasn't enough for the insatiable mind of Dick Bryant. He delved into the shareware world, starting his own company called Open Windows. He already has several successful releases to his credit, including *WinFlash*, which was recently nominated for a Shareware Industry Association Award.

But electronics isn't the only area of expertise for Dick. He's also a Level II Certified Ski Instructor, and spends a lot of his free time on the slopes of the Colorado Rockies at the Keystone Resort in Summit County. He also spends a lot of time riding mountain bikes, and even competes in the Masters circuit.



**More Info.: WinFlash**



**More Info.: WinJottr**



**More Info.: WinUpD8R**

## WinFlash



### ***WINFLS.ZIP - PBS Home, Library 4 (Education)***

WinFlash 3.0 lets you create educational flash cards in Windows designed with text, graphics, and sound elements. You design your own flashcard routines based on commented sample scripts and enter up to 1000-character questions and answers with any ASCII editor. Scripting can link .BMP and .WAV files to your routines to add pictures and sound action, too. You may also build foreign language learning routines using alphabets and dictionaries. WinFlash tracks performance on each question and answer and helps you focus on missed questions with its custom Auto Learn mode. WinFlash's windowed question and answer format is ideal for making trivia-type games, too. v3.0. Shareware, \$22.95. 143,661 bytes.

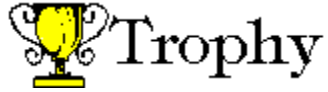
## WinJottr



### ***JOTTR.ZIP - PBS Home, Library 4 (Education)***

WinJottr enables users to write down free-form notes, item lists, or any type of information in Windows. The program functions as an unobtrusive, small window with scrolling features and may be set to run on top of other applications. You can have up to 30K worth of notes in each file, and you can date and time stamp your notes, search through and print them. Shareware, \$9.95. 88,623 bytes.

## WinUpD8R



Trophy

### ***WINUPD.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 4 (Windows)***

WinUpD8R 3.0 (that's WinUpdater) manages floppy-based PC-to-PC file updates from a simple Windows interface. This utility integrates basic file transfer features including whole directory/subdirectory updates, bidirectional new file adding, file exclusion/inclusion, and global file replacements. WinUpD8R also runs in batch mode and handles up to 300 files and 20 subdirectories per update. It's good for fast and dirty laptop-to-desktop file updates. Shareware, \$18. 68,762 bytes.



ZiffNet is the online information service all about computing. It is the first place to turn for the best in software, plus all kinds of useful information about buying, using, supporting and understanding personal computer products.

Created by Ziff Communications, publisher of the leading PC and Macintosh magazines, ZiffNet brings together the best in downloadable freeware and shareware selected for quality and reliability, discussion forums where you can talk to industry leaders and product experts, buying advice to help you make the best purchasing decisions, technical support to help you get the most from your PC, and computing news to keep you up-to-date on the industry. In addition, ZiffNet gives you access to editors and writers from the major Ziff publications, including *PC Magazine*, *PC/Computing*, *PC Week*, *MacUser*, *MacWEEK*, *Computer Shopper* and *Windows Sources*.

The ZiffNet membership fee is just \$2.50 a month. Standard CompuServe connect-time charges apply for certain services like downloading software. For more information on the rates please check online.

For details on how to sign up for ZiffNet, please see [Downloading from ZiffNet](#)

PRODIGY members can [JUMP]: **ziffnet** for full details on the ZiffNet for PRODIGY service.

## About the Ratings

All of the shareware ZiffNet offers is provided through Public Brand Software, one of the leading vendors of shareware in the world. PBS has the largest dedicated staff of professional reviewers in the industry, and each program is put through rigorous testing before it becomes available online.

Part of the review process is the assignment of a program rating. This rating is measured in stars, on a scale from 1 to 4. In addition, the best programs for a particular computer task are assigned a "Trophy" rating (5 stars).



## **This Month in Shareware**

**by Timothy Campbell**

*This month, Timothy Campbell begins a regular feature that will detail the news & notes of the shareware industry. Timothy Campbell has been following the shareware industry for several years. A shareware author himself, Tim has published several programs, and he distributes a quarterly publication entitled Who's Who in Shareware.*

## **Headlines & Breaking News**



### **Software Marketers Alliance Founded**

Casey Butler of Viable Software Alternatives launched a new shareware organization to supplement the services offered by other groups (STAR, ASP, ESC, ASAD). According to Mr. Butler, "The Software Marketers' Alliance is an organization of software authors, vendors, and sysops. Talks are now proceeding between authors and vendors as to a general direction for the organization."

When asked how SMA would complement the services already available to authors, he remarked, "Undisputed goals are the advancement of the industry as a whole by providing each member segment with tangible services and encouraging greater freedom with marketing techniques by all, vendors, authors, and sysops alike, through some form of marketing assistance."

During the month of April, the Software Marketers Alliance announced its first project, known as the Online Version Purge (OVP). The first phase was completed by the 18th.

Twenty-five of the top BBSs were searched to locate old or duplicated versions of programs belonging to the seven authors who had signed up for the pilot project. More than two thirds of the versions located online were found to be outdated. Several duplicates and possibly hacked copies were also detected. The results of the OVP were forwarded to the participating authors, who will then have an opportunity (in phase 2) to submit update disks to the sysops.

The cost for participating in the pilot project was \$8 per title. The next OVP will take place beginning June 1, 1994.



### **Contact Information**



### **Shareware Industry Stunned by Patent News**

Peter Avritch of PC Dynamics is sounding a warning for all software developers. He was shocked when Software Advertising Corporation claimed that his "Energizer Bunny" screen-saver program required him to pay them a royalty.



In essence, SAC's patent #5,105,184 (filed Nov 89, issued Apr 92), claims a royalty on any software or computer program which directly or indirectly causes an advertisement to be displayed on a computer screen. Mr. Avritch states that "According to the examples in the patent, the ad can be as simple as a company name appearing in the lower corner of a screen (much like TV station logos)."

Although PC Dynamics actually pays a royalty to EverReady for use of "The Energizer Bunny", the patentee claims they infringe on the patent because the display of the bunny could indirectly benefit EverReady.

Peter Avritch has raised the concern of representatives of the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP), Software Publishers Association (SPA) and other organizations, such as IMA and STAR.

He believes that software patents are out of control: "The [patent office] presently has no ability to grant or deny patents fairly. They lack both a database of prior art and experts in the field of programming." He believes that the patent office simply grants patents and lets the details get worked out through legal wrangling, which he refers to as "Guilty until proven wealthy"!

Thus, while Mr. Avritch claims to have plenty of the "prior art" required to overturn the patent, he says that even after spending tens of thousands of dollars "I still haven't had the opportunity to show it to anyone besides my own legal team." He is inviting comments and assistance from all people involved in software development and distribution.



#### **File Information: Bunny Patent**



#### **Contact Information**



### **Shareware Distribution Threatened in Australia**

The Australian government, concerned about violence and bad taste in computer games, is now demanding that each game (including educational games) be given a rating prior to distribution. The \$350 rating fee can be paid either by the author or by one of the distributors, and once a specific version of a game is rated, it need not be rated again.

Authors and distributors alike are worried that this new policy means that Australians will see only a few shareware games. The new policy also makes it difficult to sell shareware CD-ROMs in Australia.

It appears that the only way for Australians to get unhindered access to games is to download them from overseas BBSs and share the programs amongst themselves -- without charging a fee -- in the traditional shareware manner.



### **Ziff-Davis Announces Shareware Awards**

Several well-known magazines (*PC Magazine*, *MacUser*, *Computer Gaming World*) and Ziff-Davis Interactive are sponsoring the first annual Ziff-Davis Interactive Shareware Awards.

The awards, which will honor shareware written or upgraded between January 1, 1993 and June 1, 1994, will be awarded at the Summer Shareware Seminar (SSS) at ONE BBSCON in Atlanta on August 19th.

The Summer Shareware Seminar provides shareware authors with the opportunity to learn more about their business, while ONE BBSCON (hosted by ONE, Inc.) covers the BBS and online world.

Judges for the awards include such luminaries as Robin Raskin, editor of *PC Magazine*, Bill Machrone, Ziff-Davis vice president for technology, and Preston Gralla of ZDI.

The winning programs will be mentioned in *PC Magazine*, *MacUser* and *Computer Gaming World*. The deadline for submitting shareware is June 1, 1994.



Contact Information

## In Other News...



### SmilerShell Nominated for Shareware Award

*Free version available on ZiffNet*

SmilerShell 2.0 has been nominated by the Shareware Industry Awards Foundation as one of four finalists for its "Best Utility" award. SmilerShell is a command line processor for Microsoft Windows 3.1. According to author Barry Smiler, "Windows is wonderful ... but sometimes it's still faster and easier to just type a command." Unlike Program Manager's RUN, SmilerShell can run Windows programs, DOS programs, or DOS internal commands. It includes several built-in functions, providing (among other things) functions similar to DOS's DOSKEY capabilities.



**Program Information: Smiler Shell Lite**



**Program Information: Smiler Shell (Shareware Version)**



Contact Information



### Shareware Industry Awards Annouces Finalists

The finalists for the Shareware Industry Awards were announced this month. The SIA awards, which will be presented this June at the Sharware Industry Conference (June 24-26), are nominated by selected members of the shareware industry.

The finalists include *DOOM*, the popular 3D action game from Id Software, *List*, from Buerg Software, and *QEdit* from Semware.



Contact Information



### Results from Incentives Experiment Published

Colin Messitt of Oakley Data Services was pondering a weighty question: should shareware be based on trust alone? He decided to find out. Colin tells us that he created a text extraction and printing utility which would let him "determine whether a program which is fully evaluatable but not truly usable will [be registered] more or less than the identical program which relies merely on the end-user's honesty and the presence of two Registration Reminder screens."

His program would decide in a purely random way (50/50 chance) whether to act as a "Restricted"

program or an "Unrestricted" program. A restricted program would have the same Registration Reminder Screens as the unrestricted program, but every fourth page of printed text would be reversed. This let the user see that the program worked, yet made it impossible to use without registering.

The registration forms contained a code so that when Colin received the \$25 registration fee, he would know which "flavour" of program the user had. After two months, he compiled the following statistics:

<i>Registrations of Unrestricted Version</i>	28
<i>Registrations of Restricted Version</i>	114
<i>Unknown (order did not use coded form)</i>	17
<b>Total Registrations</b>	<b>159</b>

Colin's results have caused quite a stir in the shareware industry, because they suggest that authors will earn four times as much if they severely limit unregistered copies of their programs.

Members of the Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP) point out that people with unrestricted copies may be waiting longer to mail in their registration. However, this conflicts with earlier experiments conducted by ASP member Bob Schenot, who determined that users usually decide whether or not to register shortly after the first trial. Further tests by Timothy Campbell of Pinnacle Software (author of this column) have confirmed these results.

The ASP does allow authors to withhold features by having separate shareware and enhanced versions. They also allow a technique known as "watermarking" which bears some similarity to the technique tested by Colin. The main difference, however, is that Colin's Restricted version forced the user to register, whereas the ASP techniques make it possible for a user to "evaluate" a program forever without paying for it.



#### Contact Information

## Quick Take on Shareware



### Quick Take: Blackjack

This month's Quick Take looks at two recently released shareware blackjack programs: Blackjack Plus and Ultima 21.

#### **BLACKJACK PLUS**

Shareware author Jon Turcsanyi decided that it was time to stop donating his hard earned cash to the casinos, so he wrote Blackjack Plus. Originally released as a commercial product for the Atari ST computer, BJPLUS is now available for the PC as shareware.

Jon says that BJPLUS accurately simulates casino blackjack. Feedback and Background modes allow you to learn and evaluate chosen strategies. Two strategies are included in the shareware version, one for single deck play and one for multi-decks.

Does BJPLUS really help you improve your game? Jon confides, "A close friend who is an experienced card counter and who always does well at the tables, finds this program indispensable."

#### **ULTIMA 21**

When Jay J. Falconer first got married, he took his wife to Las Vegas, where he discovered that she was able to lose large sums of money playing blackjack. "Just like her mother", he observed. So he decided to write Ultima 21 Blackjack, to teach both mother and daughter how to play to win. The game is being considered for commercial release. But in the meantime, Jay reveals, "Many professional blackjack players use my program to practice-up on card counting and testing new playing strategies before they make a trip to the real casinos."



**Program Information: Blackjack Plus**



**Program Information: Ultima 21**



**Contact Information**

## Product Releases



### Michael D. Jones Releases Three Major Products

Shareware author Michael D. Jones released three major programs during the month of April.

Windows Word Search Mania is similar to the word puzzles that can be found in newspapers and paperback books. The game comes with over 300 puzzles that can be played on the computer or printed out for offline play.

Debt Analyzer for Windows is a financial software package which helps a person reduce debts. In one technique, a priority is calculated for each debt. Then as each debt is paid off, its payment is be applied towards the highest priority debt. In another technique, your current debt information it combined it into a single new loan with an an overall lower interest rate than your existing debts.

The Track It! series of Windows programs keep track of your videos, books, stamps, coins and personal possessions. The databases these programs create are DBase compatible.



**Contact Information**



**Program Information: Windows Word Search Mania**



**Program Information: Debt Analyzer**



**Program Information: Track It! Series**



### Canyon Software Releases Drag and View Gold

Canyon Software released Drag And View Gold, a file viewer for Windows 3.1. According to author Dan Baumbach, "It is the only file viewer that will view Excel 5, WinWord 6 and MS Works 3. Additionally, this is the only viewer that allows users to view multiple pages of spreadsheets." Drag and View also lets

you print, or copy to the clipboard. Additional formats supported include WordPerfect 6, JPEG, and DCX/DCF. A special version is available that reads AutoCad DWG files.



**Program Information: Drag and View Gold**



**Contact Information**



## **Randy Weems Releases Combat Tanks**

Combat Tanks is the first major Windows release for author Randy Weems. He explains how the game came about: "We brainstormed for a while and found that there actually was a game [with] all of the characteristics we missed: Atari 2600 Combat. Many all-nighters, a few failed classes, two graduations, and a full-time job later, we finally put the finishing touches on Combat Tanks v1.0 for Windows. Along the way we got sort of carried away and ended up creating a whole new game, expanding a simple tank battle into a tank battle against soldiers, bombers, and helicopters, as well as other tanks."



**Program Information: Combat Tanks**



**Contact Information**



## **Trophy**

### **Soleau Software Releases Bolo Adventures III**

Seven years ago, William Soleau, a globe-trotting ballet dancer and choreographer, taught himself to write shareware games as a way to relax. Two years ago he joined with two other dancers to form Soleau Software, dedicated to creating non-violent games. "The art of programming a logic type game is actually very similar to being a choreographer," says William.

"The satisfaction I get from seeing a ballet of mine performed, or seeing a program of mine bring entertainment to others is food enough for me."

Last month Soleau Software made Bolo Adventures III available on ZiffNet. "The name Bolo came about because of a childhood memory," says William. "In camp, I was called Billy Solo and I got the nickname Silly Bolo. Thus a future name evolved."

The object of the game is to get Mr. Bolo out of 15 rooms filled with various obstacles. You must actually construct the means to escape. According to William, "Bolo Adventures isn't a contest of how fast your reflexes are, it's a test of your resourcefulness."



## **Trophy**

**Program Information: Bolo Adventures III**



## **Trophy**

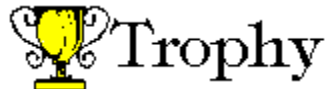
**Contact Information**



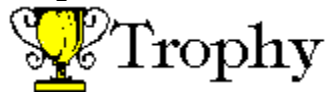
## **IrwinWare Releases Dr. Form v3.1**

Dr. Form lets you create professional quality forms. It provides full mouse support so you can easily draw lines, move, copy and so on. With its automatic grid maker and "Create Master Forms" feature, you can quickly design a form and fill it in. Forms can be printed in portrait or landscape mode, on blank paper or preprinted forms, using regular, bold or italic fonts.

Dr. Form was given a four-star rating in the Public Brand Software catalog.



**Program Information: Dr. Form**



**Contact Information**

## **Contact Information: SMA**

### **Software Marketers'Alliance**

P.O. Box 98134, Las Vegas, NV, USA 89193-8134  
Phone (702) 261-0820; CompuServe 72043,46

### **Viable Software Alternatives**

RR 10, Box 360, Carbondale, IL, USA 62901  
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## **Contact Information: Michael D. Jones**

**Michael D. Jones**

Phone (801) 295-1890; CompuServe 71672,3464; BBS (801) 963-8721



## **Contact Information: PC Dynamics**

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31332 Via Colinas, #102, Westlake Village, CA USA 91362

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**Dan Baumbach, Canyon Software**

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### **SSS/ONE BBSCON:**

**Summer Shareware Seminar/One BBSCON Registration**

Phone 303-693-5253

## Contact Information: Randy Weems

**Randy Weems**

CompuServe 72437,2702

## **Contact Information: Bardon Data Systems**

**Barry Smiler, Bardon Data Systems**

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## **Contact Information: Soleau Software**

**William Soleau, Soleau Software**

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Phone (905) 857-4141; CompuServe 70446,76

**Bob Ostrander, Software Co-op**

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## **Contact Information: IrwinWare**

**Russ Irwin, IrwinWare**

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## Contact Information: Incentives Experiment

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**Bob Schenot, Compass/New England**

PO Box 117, Portsmouth, NH, USA 03802-0117

Phone (603) 431-8030; CompuServe 70511,720

## **Contact Information: Quick Take on Blackjack**

### **BLACKJACK PLUS**

**Jon Turcsanyi**  
CompuServe 72060,3321

### **BLACKJACK: ULTIMA 21**

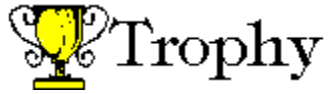
**Jay J. Falconer, Bitwise Software International, Inc.**  
901 W. Hononegh Drive, Phoenix, AZ, USA 85027  
Phone (602) 582-4468; CompuServe 72074,2677

## **Track It! Series**

***TKB.ZIP, TKC.ZIP, TKS.ZIP, TKV.ZIP, TKH.ZIP - PBS Home, Library 1 (Hot Off the Presses)***

These programs allow you to track and organize several different collections, including books, videos, stamps, coins and other personal possessions.

## Windows Word Search Mania

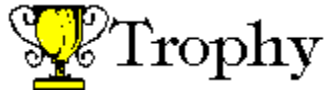


Trophy

### ***WWS.ZIP - PBS Arcade, Library 10 (Puzzles)***

With Windows Word Search Mania, users can play up to 75 different puzzles. The game may be played on your desktop or the puzzles can be printed out. Users can time the game, reveal clues and select sound options. There are three levels of registration with each one increasing in the number of puzzles. In addition, with the Gold version you can add and edit your own puzzles. Requires Windows 3.1 v1.0. Shareware, \$6-\$10. 509,154 bytes.

## Debt Analyzer for Windows



### **WDT.ZIP - PBS Professional, Library 3 (Business & Finance)**

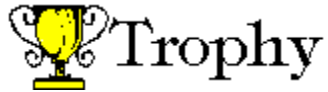
Debt Analyzer for Windows gives you information and a number of plans to help you reduce or eliminate your debts. It helps you prioritize debt payments and consolidate loans to save money. The program gives you an easy-to-follow, systematic way to shed debt with realistic plans. With it you start devising your debt-reduction strategies using data on your current debt and seeing how it is affected by different payment methods. Debt Analyzer's tools analyze, prioritize, or consolidate up to 20 debts. The program lists your debts, interest rates, payments (minimum, current, accelerated) and helps you pick the best payment plan. It helps you save money by reducing interest paid on your debts. Status reporting lets you view or print details of monthly or yearly accounts, payments, balances and summaries. Shareware, \$15-25. 384,429 bytes.

## **Energizer Bunny Copyright Battle**

***BUNNY.ZIP - PBS Home, Library 6 (Files In the News)***

Texts and Graphics on the alleged Copyright violation of the Energizer Bunny Screen Saver. The ramifications of this action can have far reaching effects on computing. 100,328 bytes.

## Drag and View Gold

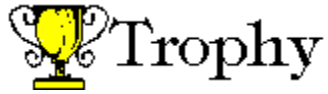


Trophy

### ***DRAGVG.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 4 (Windows Utilities)***

Drag and View Gold is an excellent Windows file viewer that eliminates the problem of not being able to view a file just because you don't have the original program. ASCII, MS Word, WordPerfect, Ami Pro, Q&A Write and popular database and spreadsheet formats can be viewed, in addition to several graphics formats. You can also look inside ZIP and LZH archives. Files can be viewed in ASCII, HEX or native format. Multiple files can be open at a time, and you can search for text strings, copy portions of files to the clipboard, and print files. Drag and View Gold has drag-and-drop support and includes Fileman Launcher, a File Manager accessory that runs and exits Drag And View Gold everytime you run and exit File Manager. Registered Drag and View Gold users receive a version that reads additional file formats. Shareware, \$35. 517,587 bytes.

## Combat Tanks



Trophy

### ***CTANK.ZIP - PBS Arcade, Library 1 (Hot Off the Presses)***

Combat Tanks is a shoot-em-up action game for 1 or 2 players. The object of the game is to survive! Set in a terrain that consists of walls, water and mud, you will be attacked by other tanks, foot soldiers, land mines and the dreaded death chopper. You can pick up tokens along the way that allow you to pick up extra weapons. Your opponents become more aggressive as you progress to new levels. The program comes with sound card support and there are some graphics that may be offensive. Shareware, \$10. 276,597 bytes.

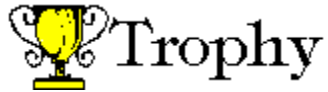


## Smiler Shell Lite

### ***SMILTE.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 8 (ZiffNet Custom Utilities)***

This Special Edition of SmilerShell Lite Version 2.0 is provided by ZiffNet Custom Utilities from Bardon Data Systems. SmilerShell Lite is a Windows command line. It runs anything (DOS programs, Windows programs, or DOS internal commands), and it supports pipes and redirection. It has a built-in command line editor with history and search. SmilerShell Lite Version 2.0 is available through Ziff-Davis Interactive online services. Copyright 1994 Barry Smiler. **CANNOT BE UPLOADED ELSEWHERE.** Requires Windows 3.x. v2.0. 64,416 bytes.

## Smiler Shell

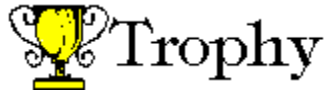


Trophy

### ***SMILTE.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 4 (Windows)***

SmilerShell 2.0 is a command line shell for Windows 3.1. It runs any DOS program, Windows program, or DOS internal command, and it supports pipes and redirection. It has a command line editor with history and search , aliases, and more. This shell can be easily customized with its built-in editor. The fast directory change feature works across multiple drives. If you prefer to use the command line when working in Windows, this program can be the answer to your prayers. Requires Windows 3.1. v2.0. Shareware, \$19.95. 94,531 bytes.

## Bolo Adventures III



### ***BOLO3.ZIP - PBS Arcade, Library 10 (Puzzles)***

Bolo Adventures III is another in a series of excellent puzzle games from Soleau Software. The object of this one is to reach the red stairs located in each of 15 puzzle rooms. Using the animated, Mr. Bolo character you must move around the puzzle taking advantage of various objects such as balls, boxes, crates, holes, water and others until you can access the red stairs. The various objects can be used in different ways to accomplish your mission. This is a game of logic, not a race against time. You can turn the sound on and off, and get solutions to the first three games. There is a demo game which will help you get a feel for the puzzles. Watch out for the lasers! Shareware, \$12. 110,649 bytes.

## Dr. Form

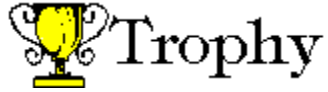


Trophy

### ***DRFORM.ZIP - PBS Applications, Library 3 (DOS)***

Users can design their own forms with Dr. Form, an easy-to-use program that includes tools such as Move, Copy and Erase. In addition, users can duplicate characters, draw lines and fill in areas. The program will make forms up to 63 rows, by up to 136 columns in addition to character duplication, line-drawing with a mouse and fill-in areas. It also has an automatic grid maker. Users can load ASCII files saved from other programs and dress them up. The program provides the entire IBM extended character set along with context-sensitive help menus. Dr. Form includes 7 beginner lessons along with sample forms, label-making and pre-addressed envelopes. Shareware, \$39. 359,896 bytes.

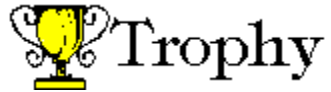
## Blackjack Plus



### ***BJPLUS.ZIP - PBS Arcade, Library 4 (Card Games)***

Blackjack Plus allows beginners and experts to practice and perfect blackjack skills. You can play with a mouse, joystick or keyboard. Up to 7 players can play in 4 play modes. Shareware, \$20. 107,407 bytes.

## Ultima 21



### ***ULTIMA.ZIP - PBS Arcade, Library 4 (Card Games)***

Ultima 21 Deluxe for Windows gives you absolute control over your blackjack game. Loaded with custom controls, this game lets you setup automatic play and help modes, select playing strategies (hit, stand, double or split), peek at cards before dealing, control the game speed, and even display game statistics. It comes with a hints window and saves and loads games of your choosing. Requires Windows 3.1, 3MB RAM, 4 MB free hard disk space and the Visual Basic 3.0 runtime module. v2.1b Shareware, \$39.95. 537,097 bytes.



## Windows ToolBar Launchers

by Scott Arpajian

Microsoft didn't really score any points with Program Manager. It's ugly, inefficient, and it hogs most of your desktop space. In short, it's destiny lies somewhere hidden on your hard drive, buried deep, where you won't accidentally use it. Let's face it: a lot of software companies, such as Central Point (PC Tools), Symantec (Norton Desktop) and Hewlett-Packard (Dashboard) are making a lot of money selling you programs that replace this awful excuse for a menu system. Of course, shareware authors are no strangers to opportunity, and several Program Manager replacements have appeared in the shareware arena recently.

One of the truly beautiful things about shareware is that there are always plenty of programs to choose from in any particular category. Of course, in many cases, that's a mixed blessing. Take the fabled DOS Menu genre: a category of programs with no less than 150 shareware or freeware contenders. And Windows shareware users are certainly familiar with the plethora of Windows Resource Monitors available through shareware channels.

But DOS Menu programs and Windows Resource Monitors need to step aside: there's a new program category crowding the market: Windows ToolBar Launchers. This month, we'll take a look at this growing field, and help you separate the clear winners from the losers.

### ButtonStar Deluxe

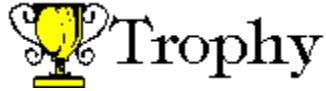
Mark J. DiBiaso; Data Design Systems, Inc.; 15958-B Shady Grove Road; Gaithersburg, MD 20877; (301) 330-5087  
Registration: \$28



ButtonStar Deluxe replaces the clumsy Program Manager groups with a series of 3D push-buttons. You can quickly launch programs simply by clicking on a the appropriate button, which contains the program icon for quick visual reference.

ButtonStar Deluxe is extremely efficient, giving you quick access to your programs. With ButtonStar Deluxe, there's no need to search through program groups for a particular program icon. Everything is made easily accessible. The only performance drawback I found was that ButtonStar Deluxe runs slowly on some systems, with noticeable screen-refresh delays.

The program is extremely configurable, allowing you to organize your programs in button groups. It also automatically reads in your existing Program Manager groups, so that you can launch those as well. It is important to note that while the shareware evaluation version organizes these pre-existing groups, you can't actually launch them until you register ButtonStar Deluxe. You're also limited to saving information about 18 buttons and a single group with the evaluation version.



**More Info.: ButtonStar Deluxe**

## LaunchPad

Paul Traver; PO Box 998; Bishop, CA 93514; (617) 873-8754; CIS: 72144,422

There are three unwritten rules about program installations in Windows. LaunchPad breaks two of them.

### **Rule 1: Let the User Choose the Destination Directory.**

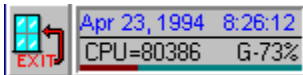
Some programs force themselves into a pre-determined directory on your system. Good installation routines allow you to veto the suggested directory and enter your own. There wasn't any problem here. LaunchPad suggested a directory name, but it was optional.

### **Rule 2: Don't automatically create a Program Manager Group.**

Creating a group should be optional and up to the user. Most of us have too many Program Groups, and really don't want individual groups set up for every program. LaunchPad failed miserably on this rule, automatically creating a Program Manager Group and associated icons. Of course, the true irony of this is that LaunchPad is supposed to be replacing Program Manager. Why bother to create a Program Manager Group?

### **Rule 3: Don't automatically Install the Program to the StartUp Group.**

Once again, the user should be able to decide if they want a program installed into their StartUp Group. It's great to have the option, but nobody wants programs throwing themselves into their StartUp groups. LaunchPad doesn't give you this option.



As far as actual program execution, LaunchPad continued to be a disappointment. It featured many bugs and problems that kept its usability to a minimum. The interface is impossible to understand, and there's very little documentation or online help. Even exiting the program brought up an Illegal Function Call error. Advice to the LaunchPad author: put it back in the hangar and give it a major tune-up. This program isn't ready to take off yet.



**More Info.: LaunchPad**

## Plain Ol' Button Bar

Michael Grice; 8234 Excelsior Drive; Pensacola, FL 32514

This program's title is somewhat misleading, as it's anything *but* plain. Plain Ol' Button Bar is a fairly comprehensive toolbar application that packs a lot of features. Unfortunately, the interface is a little awkward and the poor design hides most of the program's functionality.





Essentially, POBB is a vertical toolbar that is designed to sit on either the right or left side of your desktop. Clicking on individual program buttons launches those applications. You can have either one or two vertical columns with up to 15 buttons each. There are also three horizontal fly-out extended button bars, which give you the opportunity to add even more applications to your toolbar.

Normally, adding applications to a toolbar launcher can be cumbersome. POBB makes it a snap by supporting Drag & Drop functionality. You can drag the application's filename from File Manager into the Configuration Dialog. POBB will automatically fill-in the path, filename and icon for the application. All you need to do is pick a button, and POBB sets everything up for you.



Unfortunately, the interface is awkward. POBB is lacking the normal Window elements you'd expect, such as the control-menu box and minimize/maximize buttons. There also doesn't seem to be an easy way to close the program without shutting down Windows. It does feature some fancy buttons and graphics, but they really slow the application down. The configuration screen seems to paint itself piece by piece onto your desktop every time you open it.

Plain Ol' Button Bar does have some handy features, however. There is a resource gauge at the top of the bar, and two small buttons allow you to quickly restart or exit Windows. The current time is displayed in the title bar of the toolbar window. And POBB has a file search feature that supports wildcards.

All things considered, Plain Ol' Button Bar has a lot of potential, but the author really needs to address the speed and interface concerns before it can be considered a true contender as a replacement for Program Manager.



**More Info.: Plain Ol' Button Bar**

## **ViaCommander**

Viable Software Alternatives; PO Box 98134; Las Vegas, NV 89193



ViaCommander, from Viable Software Alternatives, operates as an always on top toolbar. It floats above all other Windows applications, giving you instant access to whatever programs you have installed on the toolbar. ViaCommander operates using three types of toolbar buttons: Application Buttons, Group Buttons and Launch Bar Buttons. The first works just like any other toolbar program: clicking on a button launches a particular application. It is the implementation of Group Buttons and Launch Bar Buttons that gives ViaCommander its edge.

Group Buttons allow you to activate several applications at once. This is ideal if you perform different tasks that require multiple applications, such as a database and a word processor. ViaCommander can even remember how you want the applications sized and arranged on your desktop. Launch Bar Buttons allow you to create and maintain several different Launch Bars, which are essentially drop down menus off the main toolbar.



ViaCommander allows you to configure the toolbar appearance to your individual tastes. It sports a nicely done configuration dialog that's very easy to figure out. You can create and save multiple toolbar files, which allows you to store endless configurations. The actual configuration options are present, but limited. You can select from three button sizes, and a toolbar width of either 3, 5, 10 or 15 buttons. Regardless of the toolbar width, you can scroll through all your application buttons. The shareware evaluation version of ViaCommander gives you up to 10 application buttons and one group button. The fully-registered version allows you up to 75 applications and 6 groups, which should be more than enough for even the most prolific application user.

ViaCommander is flexible and easy to use, although it runs slowly at times, especially when you bring up the configuration dialog. It was written in Visual Basic, and therefore requires the Visual Basic 3.0 runtime module. But with its ease of use, flexibility and attractive interface, ViaCommander is a good choice for helping to get rid of the Program Manager blues.



**More Info.: [ViaCommander](#)**

## Window Manager

KiwiSoft; PO Box 2133; Midlothian, VA 23113; (804) 744-2752; CIS: 74004,3213

KiwiSoft's Window Manager transcends the standard definition of a toolbar. Technically, it's a replacement for both your Windows Task Manager and Program Manager. Once installed, it hangs out in the background, invisible on the desktop. (Talk about *unobtrusive*.) You can activate Window Manager in one of several ways: using the hot button (either the middle or right mouse button), double-clicking your mouse button anywhere on the desktop, or by pressing CTRL-ESC (normally the Task Manager hotkey).

Once activated, the Window Manager pops to the forefront of your desktop, presenting you with a combination toolbar/task manager window. You can launch programs simply by double clicking on their icons. If the programs are currently running, you can also click on their titles in the task list. Window Manager features a full range of configuration options, which allow you to change the hotkeys, button sizes, and even install Window Manager as your Windows Shell (thereby bypassing Program Manager entirely).

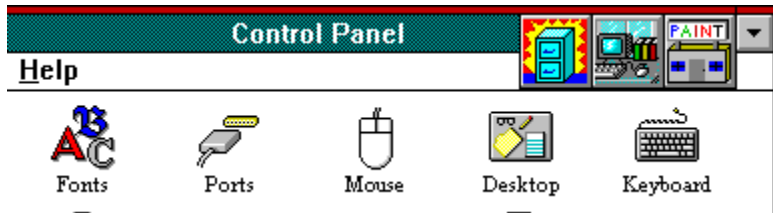
## BUILDING PROGRAM ICONS

One of the major hassles with Program Manager and other launching utilities is the process of

creating a new program icon. You need to create an icon, specify a directory, type in a title, etc. With Window Manager, all you have to do is run the program, activate Window Manager, and click on the Create Icon Button from Task button. All of the necessary information is filled in for you.

Once you've got the icon on your toolbar, you can edit its properties, change the icon, specify if it should run minimized, and change its position on the toolbar. You can even specify that the application should be run whenever Window Manager is activated.

## THE SPEEDBAR

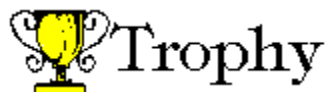


The real standout in Window Manager is an interesting feature called the SpeedBar. This is a row of icons, representing your active applications that appears on whatever the currently active main Window is. In other words, if you're currently running Excel, Corel DRAW!, and Word in the background, (minimized), and you've got ZShare running in the foreground, the icons for Excel, Corel DRAW!, and Word will appear along the title bar of ZShare. Switching between applications is now literally a double-click away. With SpeedBar, there's no need to minimize your applications in order to switch between them.

Of course the SpeedBar takes a little getting used to, but it's an ingenious device and really sets Window Manager apart from the field. You can adjust the size of the SpeedBar icons, so that they occupy either both the title bar and the menu bar of the active window, or just the title bar. If you're running a lot of applications at once, you might be more comfortable with the smaller icons. SpeedBar can also be configured to show either all active applications, or just active applications that are not minimized. It even allows you to specify a static or dynamic sorting order. Essentially, a dynamic order will cause SpeedBar to re-shuffle the icons based on when the application was last used. About the only thing you can't do with SpeedBar is turn it off. This can cause some problems with small Windows, since SpeedBar will obscure the Window Title if it needs to. But once you start using SpeedBar regularly, the idea of disabling it will be the furthest thing from your mind.



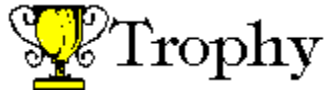
With powerful features such as the SpeedBar, and a cleverly unobtrusive presence, KiwiSoft's Window Manager is the clear leader in the field. Although some of the other programs reviewed here can match Window Manager's speed or performance, none come close to the overall design and power that KiwiSoft's program packs. It's ease of use, power and customization earn it the distinction of the first ZShareBest Choice honor. If you're looking for a solid replacement or companion to the Windows Program Manager, KiwiSoft's Window Manager is your best bet.



**More Info.: Window Manager**



## Window Manager

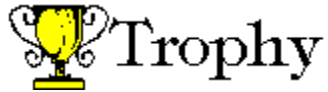


Trophy

### ***WINMAN.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 4 (Windows Utilities)***

KiwiSoft's Window Manager is a full featured replacement for the standard Program Manager. You can use it to completely replace Program Manager, or as just a helpful addition. It comes preconfigured for the included Windows applications and utilities, and can be easily set up to run up to 50 of your favorite applications. Its menu features a complete task switcher so you can easily move between applications. Perhaps its nicest feature is a SpeedBar - it places the icon buttons for each program that's running in the title bar of the current application. Using the SpeedBar makes switching between applications a snap, and is easier than using the ALT-TAB standard Windows method. Shareware, \$20. 198,980 bytes.

## ViaCommander

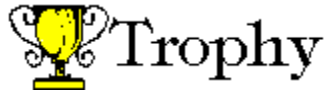


Trophy

### ***VCOMWN.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 4 (Windows)***

ViaCommander is an application manager with a sizable button toolbar that always floats on top of the desktop. Placing icons in this toolbar is as easy as the click of the mouse. You can configure the button size, window size, and toolbar width. Adding and deleting button items is easily performed, and icons can be assigned from a pick list. You can configure up to 10 icon buttons. Registration allows for 75 buttons in a scrollable toolbar. Shareware, \$26.95. 116,231 bytes.

## Plain Ol' Button Bar



Trophy

### ***PLAINB.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 4 (Windows)***

Plain Ol'Button Bar 1.01 configures a vertical button bar to launch up to 57 Windows applications. Designed with 2 columns holding 15 buttons, the layout includes 3 extended button bars which add up to 27 more application buttons. You can adjust the size and positioning of Plain Ol'Button Bar, and keep it always to the foreground of your desktop. Shareware, \$15. 233,995 bytes.

## LaunchPad



### ***LNCHPD.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 4 (Windows Utilities)***

Launch Pad lets you access up to 40 of your favorite programs. Program icons are displayed, and a double click runs the program. You can also have system information shown such as the date and time, along with your choice of Windows mode, session time, free memory, drive A, B or C information, or Windows or DOS version. You can set up your menu buttons manually, or use drag-and-drop to set them up from the File Manager. You can attach sounds to your menu items and use the quick exit button when you're ready to leave Windows. v1.0. Shareware, \$10. 160,572 bytes.



## **ButtonStar Deluxe**

***BSTAR.ZIP - PBS Utilities, Library 1 (Hot Off the Presses)***

ButtonStar Deluxe V5.3.3 is a full featured program launcher for Windows. Features include: Easy button config-Drag & Drop from FM. Popup Alarms & Prgm Scheduler, PM Group Bar, Popup Task manager, On-line Help, User selectable display matrix. ButtonStar's interface is comprised of two page matrices of 36 buttons each, and 9 toolbars of 9 buttons each (153 total Buttons).

