ZShare
Ziff-Davis Interactive Monthly Shareware Review

April 1995
Issue Number 21

Newest Titles
Some new, some improved, all hot.

Featured Reviews
Business tools, Carnage, a 'Net map, and more.

Toolkit
Hurry! Check out these tax tools.

Zips and Zaps
Comments from Timothy Campbell.

Author Spotlight: Terry Hastings
The "Ultimate" game author.

How to Download from ZiffNet

About ZShare and ZiffNet

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:

ZiffNet/CompuServe

All of the programs mentioned in ZShare 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 Library" from the menu. Then perform a search--"Find a Specific Title"--for the program you are interested in.

Becoming a ZiffNet Subscriber

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Print for future reference

Become a ZiffNet Subscriber

Anyone with a modem and communications software can discover for themselves everything ZiffNet offers. It's easy! CompuServe members can simply type GO ZIFFNET. If you are not currently a CompuServe member, just follow these easy steps:

1. Set your communications software to 7 data bits, even parity, one stop bit. Select a data transfer rate (bits per second) of 1,200, 2,400, 9,600 or 14,400 bps. 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.

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 Print for future reference

Below are some of the newest additions to our libraries. These files are available for downloading on ZiffNet for CompuServe and ZiffNet for Prodigy.

Downloading from Ziffnet

Ziff-Davis Originals

ZDI's Chooser Utility v2.0
CompuServe: GO PBSUTIL, Library 8 (ZDI Exclusives), and search for ZCHOSR.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
The version lets you randomize screen savers and setup modules outside the Windows directory.

ZDI's Spring Image Pack for Folding Fan Screen Saver
CompuServe: GO PBSUTIL, Library 8 (ZDI Exclusives), and search for ZFFDLS.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
These images--kites flying and clocks springing ahead--require ZDI's Folding Fan Screen Saver.

ZDI's Spring Image Pack for Drawing Screen Saver
CompuServe: GO PBSUTIL, Library 8 (ZDI Exclusives), and search for ZDRDLS.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
These images--kites flying and clocks springing ahead--require ZDI's Drawing Screen Saver.

1MB Fort & 1MB View
CompuServe: GO TIPS, Library 2 (PC Mag Utilities), and search for 1MBF.ZIP
Do you suffer from chronic lack of low memory? Try this pair of utilities.

Tools & Utilities

BK Planner v1.0
CompuServe: GO PBSAPPS, Library 6 (PIMs), and search for BKPLAN.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
No-nonsense personal planner skips the bells and whistles in favor of low overhead.

WinHelp Extension DLL v2.0
CompuServe: GO PBSBUS, Library 13 (Programming), and search for EWBMP.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
Well-crafted add-on allows display of 256-color BMP images--and more--in Windows Help files.

Games

Operation: Inner Space v1.04
CompuServe: GO PBSARC, Library 3 (Action Games), and search for INSPAC.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
You must rescue your own icons in this arcade shoot-'em-up! Includes a screen saver.

Recycle Mania v1.0
CompuServe: GO PBSARC, Library 3 (Action Games), and search for RECMAN.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
Sort and place falling recyclables in their proper bins in a fast-paced, Tetris-style environment.

Taxi Run v1.0
CompuServe: GO PBSARC, Library 12 (Puzzles/Logic), and search for TAXIRN.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
All ages can race against the clock to pick up and drop off passengers in a big city.

Homes & Business

Chores and Rewards v1.01
CompuServe: GO PBSHOME, Library 3 (Household), and search for CHORES.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
Manage your children's chores, penalties, and rewards.

XPens v1.2
CompuServe: GO PBSBUS, Library 3 (General Business), and search for XPENS.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
Road warriors will love this easy-to-use business-expense tracking program.

FaxMail for Windows v3.16
CompuServe: GO PBSAPPS, Library 10 (General Communications), and search for FXMAIL.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
Design cover pages, phone books, group faxes and more with this full-featured program.

Recently Updated

Paint Shop Pro 3.0
CompuServe: GO PBSSTU, Library 4 (Graphics Tools), and search for PSPRO.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
This is a major update of the award-winning graphics program.

Rise of the Triad: The Hunt Begins 1.2
CompuServe: GO PBSARC, Library 3 (Action Games), and search for ROTT.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
This release now plays with 4MB RAM, and no longer requires dedicated server for network   play.

Data Protector
CompuServe: GO PBSAPPS, Library 8 (Security), and search for DATAPR.ZIP
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"
Protect your files, directories against unauthorized access. This update adds Windows support.

 Downloading from Ziffnet

REVIEWS

Alien Carnage
Vendo-matic Vaporization

Amazeing
Get Lost In An Amazeing Maze

As Easy As
A Super Shareware Spreadsheet

The Retail Solution
The Solution for Any Retail Problem

Presidents of These 50 States United
An Online Presidential Primer

The Right Resume
The Right Resume for Success

Roadmap Tutorial to the Internet
These 'Net lessons Are Friendly, Fascinating, Fact-Filled--and Free!

Alien Carnage

Reviewed by Russ Lockwood

The setting for Apogee's DOS-based arcade shoot-'em-up, Alien Carnage, may finally stretch your game-storyline gullibility to the breaking point. That an alien spaceship descends upon New York to enslave the human race and turn us into zombies seems somewhat plausible. That you are the latest in the line of heroes to be sent into the ship to deliver some missile missives and conduct gun-barrel diplomacy is also stock videogame plot.

In general, if aliens and bad guys were just a tad bit neater in stowing weaponry away, Duke Nukem and other save-the-world heroes would have a far more difficult time vaporizing villains. In Alien Carnage, you won't find a single gun, grenade, missile, or other weapon lying about the floor. Instead, these clever star-faring aliens put the goodies in vending machines. And who better to guard them but coin-carrying monsters?

That's right, you're a high-tech mugger. Equipped with a flamethrower and a jet backpack, you run, jump, and fly through the New York City sewer system in search of victims, ah, aliens. Then you can put the coins in the vending machines for even more lethal weaponry.

Of course, the real goal is to vanquish the alien beasties, free the human hostages, and take out the alien boss at the end. But it's hard to really see the monsters as threats to humanity--they were mobile piggy banks. It's a good thing the aliens don't drive cars, otherwise you'd might want to grab a squeegee.

Not that negotiating the multilevel mayhem was easy--far from it. With three levels of difficulty, there's a skill range for everyone. At the easy level, monsters die quickly and good weaponry is dirt cheap. At the expert level, monsters die hard and vending machines go upscale. The vending machines dispense grenades, mini-nukes, and other weapons and armament. Enough vending machines and coin-carrying creatures are around so you need not worry about running out of ammo.

Other than this vendo-matic antic, Alien Carnage offers typical sideways view shoot-'em-up fare. The sewers meander in a maze with moving floors (water), pits, and blocked passages that require you to trip a switch somewhere else before entering. Sections of pipe temporarily block the view of your electronic alter ego as he twists and turns through the kinks. Keyboard control is excellent: The cursor keys control movement, the space bar cycles through your weaponry, and the Alt key fires the weapon chosen.

Monsters come in all sizes and speeds, from slow-moving slime to swift green creatures reminiscent of the beastie in "Alien." If you move (scroll the screen), these regenerate and make you pay for traversing the same ground twice--no matter which weapon you used to obliterate them. Fireball, spike, and slime traps occasionally pop up to impede your progress.

Good graphics and animation accompany your hero. Monsters explode when hit, tossing pieces in all directions. Grenades bounce around until they explode in technicolor. Secret passageways are found by searching for subtle shading differences in the walls.

The 1.75MB download expands to 2.5MB of hard drive space. Registration costs $19.95 plus $5 shipping and gains you three more episodes, cheat codes, guide to secrets, and more aliens.

Although the setting is rather ridiculous, Alien Carnage is a competent arcade game. If you're a longtime gamer, Alien Carnage may seem familiar. That's because it's a descendent of the classic Halloween Harry. It breaks no new ground in game play, but remains a challenging shoot-'em-up for

arcade aficionados.

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Main Reviews Page

Amazeing

Reviewed by Susan Borden

Puzzles are a lot like cooking a meal at home: You have to plan ahead and aim for the best results. In that spirit comes the 3-D visual maze game Amazeing 4.07. Not only will it challenge the problem-solving skills of any puzzle aficionado, but it will keep almost anyone poised over their keyboard for hours. Essentially, the game begins with a view in a maze corridor. Your job is to find the exit. Sounds easy? Well, it isn't.

There are 5 levels of difficulty for single-level and multi-level mazes ranging from 10x10 to 50x50 for single-level, and from 5x5x5 to 25x25x25 for multi-level. The purpose of the game is to move through the maze in the least number of moves. The exit is identified by a box with an X on it. When you reach the exit, a message reveals the number of moves it took to complete the maze and the efficiency of your movement.

The mouse displays as a large arrow, and a mouse click sends you one step in the direction of the arrow. The motion of the game does take some time to get used to. For example, when attempting to turn a corner, you must move to the square that has the opening immediately to the left or right before turning, even though the arrow makes it look like you can go down the hallway before you actually reach it. The same rule applies for up and down movement in multi-level mazes.

There are various cheat options available to help you through the maze. You can choose to view coordinates within the maze, show a compass, or display the distance remaining between you and the exit. These particular cheat options come in handy when you're first learning the game. For example, with the distance display on, you can see that you're facing south with 20 feet between you and the exit. As you make choices to move north, south, east, or west, the display will show if you moved within 17 feet of the exit or if you've gone off 22 feet away. The coordinates option displays the X, Y, and Z coordinates of the current maze position at the bottom of the screen; this can be very helpful if you get lost and need to find your way back to the beginning of the maze.

There is also a Mud Map option that displays a map of the maze in a child window that is updated as you move through the puzzle. For multi-level mazes, squares with manholes for going up or down are displayed as gray squares in the map. Your position in the maze is shown with an ellipse.

Adding spice to the game is the Transportation option that allows you to enter the percentage probability of random transportation. Every time you move, a number between 1 and 100 is chosen. If the number is less than or equal to the transportation factor, you will be transported to a random location in the maze. You might end up closer to the exit, or you might end up farther away.

If you get a little frustrated, you can access a hint option that will reveal the next best step. If you become completely frustrated, you can ask the program to show you the solution step by step. Other options include customizing the sound and colors for the game, as well as access to online help.

There is no registration fee for Amazeing 4.07, but donations to the author are welcome. If you register this product, you receive updates of the program for free.
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PRODIGY: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Search by Title"

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As Easy As

Reviewed by Edward G. Hoffman

Few computer users today can be called generalists; more often, we all have quite specific tasks selected for our computers. Although word processing is arguably the most common application for many systems, we regularly make use of many other categories of software, especially graphics, databases, and spreadsheets. Since few of us require a wide selection of heavy-duty commercial programs, shareware is often an economical alternative to such applications. If you only use a spreadsheet now and then, or if you are a power user who is dissatisfied with the present crop of commercial programs like Lotus 1-2-3 or Microsoft Excel, As Easy As 5.5f is a DOS shareware offering worth investigating.

As Easy As is the latest offering of a basic, no-nonsense program that combines the power and utility of the standard spreadsheet format with the stability of a program that has been tested over several years. It offers all the standard spreadsheet features with useful power features. The command structure is instantly available via the slash key or by clicking the right mouse button. The program makes full use of the function keys as well as pull-down menus for a variety of commands.

Depending on the complexity of your data, As Easy As provides you with substantial room to work. With its 8,192 rows and 256 columns, it's doubtful that you'll run out of space in your worksheets. Likewise, As Easy As gives you the option of creating and displaying your data in up to six views, or windows, of the worksheet at one time. Each view can be sized and arranged to suit your needs. Simply tapping the F7 key allows you to toggle through the various views. Your data may also be displayed and printed in a variety of forms, including text, graphics, or a combination of both. A wide selection of graphic representations is available, and the data may be organized in any of several different graph styles, such as pie, line, and bar.

The program makes wide use of macros and cell formatting. As Easy As has an internal macro language, and macros are easy to create and edit. Likewise, you can create formulas for mathematical functions and assign them to specific areas of the spreadsheets without difficulty. A few specialty templates can simplify many standard spreadsheet operations.

Even a novice can quickly grasp the basic principles behind As Easy As' operation. The built-in help system is quite extensive and is instantly available with the F1 key. Here virtually all the features and procedures are explained in very understandable language. The 120+ page manual is an impressive work that not only thoroughly describes the use of the program, but offers a fine introduction to spreadsheets in general.

If you need a spreadsheet that is both friendly and powerful, As Easy As is one of the best DOS spreadsheets available in the shareware arena. Whether your requirements are robust or modest, it's almost certain to meet your needs. As Easy As requires a PC compatible computer with DOS 2.11 or higher. The program will also run well under Windows 3.x as a DOS application. (A PIF file is recommended for such use.) You need a minimum 384K of system RAM, and the program will configure itself to match your memory setup. The registration fee is $69.

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DOWNLOAD INFORMATION
COMPUSERVE: GO PBSAPPS, Library 4 (Spreadsheet), and search for **ASEASY.ZIP**

PRODIGY: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Search by Title"

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Presidents of These 50 States United

Reviewed by Ron Bel Bruno

There's a lot to be said for the Presidency--literally. In fact, you could probably spend the better part of your existence just learning merely the political aspects of each president's life. However, like most people, you probably have to earn a living, so you would rather find a time-saving means of learning the basics about this country's Commanders-in-Chief.

The Presidents of These 50 States United version 1.2 is an exhaustive online reference to both the professional and selected personal details of the 42 presidents' lives. It's all there, from Washington to Clinton, and everyone in between.

Although this is a conventional Windows program (it runs on a modest 386 PC with at least 2MB of RAM), The Presidents of These 50 States United touts a look-and-feel more typical of multimedia programs and Web pages on the Internet. Its multilayered information lets kids--as well as inquisitive adults--learn at their own pace. If, for instance, you click on "Democrats" and select "Franklin D.Roosevelt," you'll get a one-screen lowdown on FDR. Then click on "Other Information," for facts and figures more specific to that president.

You can, for example, get a synopsis of the president's life before he took office, obtain both popular-election results as well as Electoral College votes, get a cabinet roster for the time spanning the administration, or arrow-key it over to either the previous or next president. Take note: What's explained here is highly entertaining, and rather compelling in both content and navigational format.

Once you think you've studied enough about these leaders, it's time to test your knowledge. First you tell the software how many questions you want, then it fires off some very tough open-ended questions (You provide the answers in a dialog box, this being no easy multiple-choice opportunity.) Although the quiz is a good concept, the software actually repeated three questions during a 20-question run-through. Somebody's got to fix that bug.

A pull-down menu called "Firsts" provides, as you might guess, a list of presidential first events. These include such gems as First Jogger Theodore Roosevelt, First Televised President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and First Rhodes Scholar in the White House William Clinton.

Information is presented with thorough attention to historical value. The Presidents pull-down menu, for example, groups the presidents under their party affiliations. (Do you know how many parties have been represented in the White House? Answer: Five.)

Single-copy registration of The Presidents of These 50 States United (admittedly an awkward title) costs $20. This entitles you to additional facts about each president, more quiz questions, cabinet details, and printable certificates for quiz winners. School districts can purchase a $250 site license for unlimited duplication rights within their school system.

This is a slick way to teach kids about the presidential heritage of America. It's well worth its modest registration fee.

DOWNLOAD INFORMATION
COMPUSERVE: GO PBSEDU, Library 4 (Grade School), and search for **PRESWN.ZIP**
PRODIGY: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Search by Title"

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The Retail Solution

Reviewed by Timothy Campbell

The Retail Solution is a "point-of-sales" software package that performs the functions of a cash register while also tracking accounts receivable, inventory, customers, employees, commissions, and so on. All of these functions are integrated, so there is no need to manually transfer data from one module to another.

The designers have put a lot of effort into making it easy to switch over from a traditional cash-register based system to The Retail Solution (TRS). For example, security is available at menu level, which is analogous to the various keys (e.g., "the manager key") that unlock functions on a cash register. TRS can also support cash drawers, scanners, price displays and special printers for printing out receipts, invoices, and bar codes. The program can support a variety of tax schemes, even Canada's Goods and Services Tax.

Indeed, the designers seem determined to make TRS compatible with all existing configurations. The documentation says, "Just about any parallel or serial cash drawer, receipt printer or pole [price] display is supported." It makes similar claims for networks, i.e, NetWare, Windows for Workgroups, LANtastic, 3COM, and so on.

Of course, if TRS merely replaced the cash register, why would you want to switch over?   The advantage is that TRS makes use of the computer's power and flexibility. For example, you can define an inventory item that is actually a collection of items. So if you have a special on, say, a prepackaged computer system, you can ring it up as a single sale, and all the information about the individual components is entered for you. Each inventory item can also have "sales recommendations" associated with it. ("Do you want fries with that?" or perhaps, "That item needs a 9-volt battery.") If the system notices that an item is out of stock, it can recommend a substitution.

TRS includes an extensive "demo mode," which simulates a toy store that has been in business for 10 years. This lets your sales people get used to the system without compromising your "live" data. Of course, the demo also gives you an excellent opportunity to "try before you buy," in true shareware fashion.

As your business grows, a multi-site option is available to support your chain of stores. Each night, the branch stores reconcile inventory records with the main store via modem.

In the limited space available in this review, it is not possible to detail all the options available in TRS. The bottom line? Flexibility. This product has been available for 4 years, but considering the way it accommodates so many different ways of doing business, one would guess that the creators of TRS have been involved with point-of-sale software for a long time.

Version 3.0 of The Retail Solution was written by Northwest Network Solutions of Portland, Oregon. The minimum workstation is a PC with 512K RAM, 10MB of hard disk space, a monochrome monitor, and DOS.

A single-user version is $75, while the network version (which supports up to 10 stations) is $100. The multi-site version is $300, plus the cost of registration for each station. The report writer module is $50, while the File Fixer utility (which can help reconstruct data files corrupted by faulty hardware, power outages, and viruses) is $25. In all cases, shipping is $5 ($10 outside the U.S.)

It is rare to see a system of this power and versatility distributed as shareware--especially

considering that it is offered at shareware's traditionally low prices. If you have a store (or are considering opening one), you should take The Retail Solution out for a test drive.
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DOWNLOAD INFORMATION
COMPUSERVE: GO PBSBUS, Library 5 (Inventory Systems), and search for **TRS.ZIP**
PRODIGY: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Search by Title"

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The Right Resume

Reviewed by J.W. Olsen

These days many of us are looking for a job or worrying about doing so in the foreseeable future. If this includes you, here's a question: What are the easiest and the hardest things about job hunting? The answer to both questions: resume writing. At the same time, the answer just may be The Right Resume, a Windows application that requires 4MB of RAM, 4MB of hard disk space--and your total attention for best success.

Creating a resume is easy in that you mostly just need to tell employers about yourself. But creating a professional-quality resume is hard because you must bear your soul and look yourself squarely and objectively in the face. Many decisions and pitfalls lie between you and the perfect resume.

In turn, The Right Resume is easy because it provides all the tools to do its task well and organizes those tools in an effective, intuitive manner. Yet The Right Resume is challenging, too, because it doesn't sugar-coat the need for you to make some careful decisions.

The Right Resume is a solid job-hunting package that prepares both resumes and cover letters. For the latter, the program provides a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editing environment--its own mini-word processor.

For resumes, you begin with the most critical decison of all: selecting the correct type of resume for your needs. Your hand then is held through successive steps. The Right Resume supports both common types of resumes, chronological and functional, plus a subgenre of functional called targeted.

A chronological resume is great if you have a clear, established employment history leading to your job objective. You began as a shipping clerk and progressively advanced to lower management at Dynamic Widget Company, and now seek a middle-management position with them or another widget manufacturer. Here, The Right Resume gathers personal information, educational and employment history, and any additional information you want to add to design your resume. Details are automatically arranged by date in each category.

A functional resume is best if your experience doesn't self-evidently support your objectives. You've demonstrated abundant people-oriented skills outside the office and have manufacturing experience. A functional resume might be appropriate for landing a customer-service position within other manufacturing fields. Here, in addition to the above data, The Right Resume asks for the functional categories you want to highlight, and it prompts you for the related information. Employment and educational history are subordinate to the other data when your functional resume is generated.

A targeted resume is best if you have very precise job openings in mind and are willing to write a separate functional resume for each position. The program asks about more specific achievements and capabilities that meet the needs of each target.

Notably, and unlike some competitors, The Right Resume accepts information applicable to a variety of job objectives, then lets you select which items to include in the current resume. You thus can generate different resumes from one data source without retyping. You also can quickly rearrange and delete data within a given resume as required.

Software alone can't provide all the critical, decision-making advantages of a professional by your side. ("Do I include or exclude this fact? How do I cover this gap between jobs?") But if you prefer to go it alone, The Right Resume is great at guiding you and making resume preparation as easy as possible--

and for a bargain registration fee ($25) that will easily be repaid the first day of your new job.

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Roadmap Tutorial to the Internet

Reviewed by Thom Foulks

Gopher, Archie, Veronica, FTP, SLIP, Listserv, Usenet--these are all mysterious terms to the Internet newcomer ("newbie," in 'net jargon). But you'll treat them like old friends after you read the lessons and do the self-teaching exercises of the Roadmap Tutorial to the Internet. Don't scoff: Of the hundreds of thousands of words published about the Internet, "Roadmap" is one of most friendly and comprehensive guides you can find, and it's free!

In fact, the popularity of Roadmap has become almost legendary on the Internet. In the spirit of Internet camaraderie, Patrick Crispen of the University of Alabama left a few 'net messages in Summer 1994, offering his fall-scheduled "Roadmap for the Information Superhighway" to anyone who cared to subscribe. By mid-October--describing the response as "incredible"--Crispen announced that more than 62,000 persons in 77 countries had subscribed, so many that he could no longer accept subscriptions for direct distribution of the lessons.

"Never in my wildest dreams," he said, "did I expect such response." Irony: Crispen, then a 27-year-old student, did not own his own computer! (He used the university's public-access computer labs, conducting the online course through almost-daily lessons during the six weeks beginning in early October '94.)

Since then, the group of individual reference files has been packaged and repackaged many ways and continue to circulate broadly across the Internet. Crispen copyrighted the series, but made it clear he intended for them to help as many people as possible. The very moment you're reading this, it's likely that someone, somewhere, is retrieving them from one of the many Internet providers where they're posted.

Crispen's writing style is friendly, easy-going, sometimes self-deprecating, fun to read--and informative. The lessons start slowly, simply teaching you some basics about the Internet and your connection to it. Even in the first lesson--as in nearly of all of them--there is a hands-on exercise for you to do on your own. (Crispen had to warn users to not send test answers to him; the university's computers could not handle the potential response.) He also has you check your progress with self-graded "pop quizzes."

He gives you specific instructions for the proper keyboard commands to use the University of Minnesota's menu-driven Gopher system, plus how to use Veronica to search "gopherspace"--the combination of which can lead you to nearly every computer-stored information file available on the Internet. You'll also use Archie, which searches file-retrieval sites (FTP) for downloadable software, information, and graphics images.

Then there's Usenet (the world's largest BBS) with its thousands of "newsgroups," with Crispen's advice on "netiquette" and how to find message areas of interest to you. (The fact that such message-posting has a worldwide impact is demonstrated by noting Crispen's original announcements about Roadmap were posted in only a handful of newsgroups.) You'll also learn about some of the Internet's more controversial aspects, such as "spamming" and chain letters that seem to self-perpetuate themselves.

He also teaches you some history of the Internet, plus some of its startling accomplishments, such as the role of the Internet radio channel in a Moscow crisis and during the aftermath of a California earthquake; and how you can "tune in" to such situations in the future.

This is not a software-oriented guide. With some limitations by Internet providers, all the

Roadmap's lessons are accomplished in Unix or "text" mode access to your Internet provider. That means you need not worry about the confusing group of Internet software products which have emerged in recent months--you'll need only whatever standard terminal software your provider has recommended.

There's also an excusable deficiency in Crispen's coverage of the World Wide Web--excusable, because the exploding popularity of the Web was just becoming evident when these lessons were being prepared. Despite the ease of use of the Web, taking the more mundane lessons of Roadmap will help you understand the Web's underpinnings and how to use Internet facilities that are not Web-based.

Although not organized as a manual, we'd suggest you print the lessons of the Roadmap. Then you'll have them in front of you at the computer, as Crispen guides you down the road--to anywhere. It's a fascinating trip.

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DOWNLOAD INFORMATION
COMPUSERVE: GO PBSAPPS, Library 11 (Internet), and search for **ROADMA.ZIP**
PRODIGY: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Search by Title"

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Tax Toolkit
By Ron Bel Bruno

Unless you live in Monaco, it's true: The only givens in life are indeed death and taxes. What often remain uncertain, however, is how to estimate and file those taxes once April rolls along. This assortment of tax preparation programs will take some of the sting out of an otherwise blissful April.

AM-Tax
CompuServe: GO HOME, Library 6 (Personal Finance), and search for **AMTAX.ZIP**
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"

AM-Tax is easily the most powerful and up-to-the-minute member of this lineup. The versatile program comes in four flavors: The unregistered Shareware Version includes everything needed to file Form 1040 and Schedules A through F, EIC, F, R, and SE. The Personal Version adds 18 more form options. In addition to offering 25 more forms than the Shareware Version, the Professional Version for tax preparers touts invoicing and label-printing features. Most notably, yet another version for tax professionals provides for electronic filing of tax documents direct to the IRS.

Despite this program's functional sophistication, its modest hardware requirements (you can run it on an IBM PC with DOS 2.0 and two floppy drives!) allow for printing a valid tax form on a dot matrix printer. Registration ranges from $20 for the Shareware Version (entitling you to telephone support and updates) to $150 for the Professional package.

Form 8829
CompuServe: GO PBSBUS, Library 10 (Tax Forms/Schedules), and search for **IRSE94.ZIP**
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"

Abobe Acrobat Reader
CompuServe: GO PBSSTU, Library 4 (Graphics Tools), and search for **ACRORD.ZIP**
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"

The IRS is getting tough on self-employed individuals who claim business expenses on their living space. Form 8829 is used for the accurate reporting of such activities along with your Schedule C.

This form is in Adobe Acrobat format, so to view and/or print it, you'll need the Adobe Acrobat Reader (also available in the Software Center).

QuickTax
CompuServe: GO PBSBUS, Library 9 (Finance-Business), and search for **QTAX.ZIP**
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"

Are you a dependent? The head of your household? Should you file jointly with your spouse, or separately? Though an accountant would typically ask you these questions before filling out your return, why not ask and answer them yourself?

QuickTax walks you through such determinations, using a roster of qualifying questions for each of the aforementioned areas.

Once you've made your determination, QuickTax quizzes you on all the basic data it needs to prepare your form. However, unlike many of its tax preparation peers, QuickTax assumes you don't care what the actual tax form looks like; it just posts the questions on screen, you type in the answers, and it works behind the scenes to spit out your completed tax form.

The $19 QuickTax is a sure value. Individual filers can use it to determine the answers to key tax questions, while tax preparers can also use it as an interview tool.

Tax Break: "101 Perfectly Legal Tax Wise Strategies"
CompuServe: GO PBSHOME, Library 6 (Personal Finance), and search for **TXBREK.ZIP**
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"

This text-file compendium of tax tips is categorized into easily referenced categories such as "The Best Ways to File," "For Homeowners," "Business Pursuits," "Retirement," and "Audits and IRS Strategies." Its straight-from-the-hip advice, presented in an insider's point of view, attempts to give you a behind-the-scenes view of what makes the IRS tick--and, in the process, help you to learn how to keep as much of your precious income as possible.

Though Tax Break offers a host of pithy facts and witticisms about dealing with taxes and the IRS, it isn't always on the mark. In its audits section, for example, the software advises taxpayers facing an audit to always bring their tax advisers. Actually, many accountants will tell you that such a defensive posture may actually increase the examiner's hard-nosed scrutiny.

Also in the audits section is an entry on when to schedule an audit. The software recommends a late-morning appointment (since the examiner won't want to miss lunch, and thus rush the meeting) or a meeting on a Friday before a holiday weekend, for similar reasons. A bit inane? Yes!

Despite some of its more questionable areas, this reference is an interesting read—especially because it has no set fee. The author accepts contributions of the user's determination.

TaxCheck 2.1
CompuServe: GO PBSHOME, Library 6 (Personal Finance), and search for **TAXCHK.ZIP**
Prodigy: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Find a Specific Title"

Why not avoid tax nightmares well BEFORE April 15? That's the idea behind Tax Check, software made to track your tax liabilities throughout the year.

If you have regular wages, common deductions, and typical interest income, the program assures you'll get the hang of its navigation via its on-screen assistance. Those with multiple income types, such as self-employment proceeds or other more complex tax demands, can read more in-depth discussions of such expenses in the manual. However, the program won't let you input more than $100,000 in annual income; therefore, six-digit earners, who typically have more complicated filing requirements, can't use this software.

Version 2.1's improvement include an estimate display on the menu screen, guidance boxes, more input help, and enhanced display quality. The program assures savvy estimates, as long as your financial data (such as income and deductions) remain consistent and predictable throughout the year. Registration is $9.95.

WPRO94

At $60, WPRO94 is the most costly personal-tax application in this collection. What you're essentially paying for here is the cost of putting a pretty Windows face on the ugly task of tax preparation.

Tapping its graphical basis, it's the only program that offers such niceties as a bitmapped Form 1040. (To take advantage of this feature, however, you need 8MB of RAM and a high-quality printer, such as a better inkjet or laser unit.)

Other Windows features include a drag-and-drop help icon on the Toolbar. Simply click on it once; when the question-mark appears, drag it to the area of the tax form in question. Though in concept this is a great idea, it falls short in execution. You can drop the icon anywhere on Form 1040, for example, but still get the same voluminous help file, through which you'll need to scroll to find the answer.

Data entry is relatively straightforward. When you click on a form's empty blank, a dialog box pops up, into which you type the appropriate data. It's a little awkward, but it works.
Z

Zips and Zaps is a monthly news and opinion column by Timothy Campbell, who has been writing shareware since 1986. In this column, Mr. Campbell presents his observations on computing, with particular emphasis on shareware and the online community. The opinions expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect those of Zshare or Ziff-Davis Interactive.

Our Best Pro File

With this issue, I am introducing a new section to Zips and Zaps: "Our Best Pro File." In this section (published monthly, if people are enthusiastic enough about the witty title), I will present amusing anecdotes sent to me by professional shareware authors and their friends. If you submit a story on behalf of an associate, please ensure that you have permission to reproduce the story. This month, we present two horrifying tales of technical support. The first story comes from Bernard Hill (CompuServe/ZiffNet 100415,3372)

> *Overheard sitting next to Technical Support phone line during a particularly knotty session:*
>
> *"How familiar are you with DEBUG?"*
> *"..."*
> *"That's great! Just load it up, then!"*
> *"..."*
> *(in a resigned voice) "Just type D-E-B-U-G and press Enter."*

I know; we've all "been there, done that!" It seems that some users are eager to impress us with how technically proficient they are. Some, though, don't claim to know anything. Here's a story from Greg Nelson (CompuServe/ZiffNet 70274,1772):

> *While assisting an inexperienced user on the phone, I told her to press the Y key in response to a Y/N prompt. There was a long pause, and she said, "Nothing is happening!"*
>
> *I replied, "What are you doing?"*
>
> *She said, "I'm pressing the Y key, just as you said to do!"*

Well, whose fault was it? Surely the instructions should have been "tap the Y key," not "press the Y key." Some authors try to get around the problem by saying "Hit the Y key," only to be asked, "How hard?"

If you have a story for us, send it to me via the E-mail address at the end of this column. See if your romantic life doesn't improve if you add the words, "Oh, yeah, I send regular contributions to a monthly column, so I'm, like, a writer" to your dating service bio.

The Name Game

Shareware authors who are keen to set up a system on the Internet should move fast, because all the good domain (system) names will soon be taken. Colin Messitt (CompuServe/ZiffNet 74774,1347) related the following woeful experience:

I found the whole process of registering our domain name the most frustrating thing I have done in years. The first name we chose was actually already taken but wasn't being used and we had no sure way of finding that out -- even logging on to the Internic [Internet Information Center] site is no guarantee, as we discovered. It took nearly eight weeks just to be told that! Then it took another six weeks to be approved for www.smartcode.com -- the second domain name we chose.

This story will sound familiar to anybody who has ever tried to incorporate a company. In such case, you must first do a "name search" (an expensive proposition) to ensure that nobody else wants to name his company "Centrifugal Aardvark International," or whatever label you happen to cherish. I know of a fellow who indicated his disdain for the process by incorporating two companies with names that at first glance look normal. The first was called "Prefoba"--an acronym derived from "Prepare For Bankruptcy." The second name was "Tolfan," which stands for "Tired Of Looking For A Name." Another friend called his company "BFR." He claimed these were the initials of the founders; however, since he was co-founder and his name was Claude, I was skeptical, but he refused to admit to anything.

My first company was named "The Inevitable Corporation," which was memorable indeed. But for some reason, nobody took me seriously. Go figure.

The Ratings Game

Several months ago, I reported on the congressional debate for two vastly different approaches to rating computer games--an issue that some shareware authors felt could make it impossible for basement-based game hackers to earn a decent wage. The approach recommended by the International Digital Software Association (Nintendo, Sega, and others) was horrendously expensive and advocated rating by age, whereas the method recommended by the Software Publishers Association (SPA) and the three main shareware organizations (ASP, STAR, and ESC) rated games economically, by content.

Confused yet? Hang on to your virtual hat. Now, from the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) comes a third method, which also rates game by age, on the tacit assumption that most parents are like Ward and June Cleaver (of "Leave It To Beaver" fame), while the more liberal "Roseanne" type of family can't afford a computer.

The ESRB's approach works like this: Three people between ages 21 and 70 are selected from a pool of testers and view videotapes (submitted by the author) that represent the most shocking parts of the game. The rating is achieved once these three people achieve consensus. You don't have to be a statistician to see that the methodology has several truck-sized holes in it. But if you're still interested, you can call the ESRB at 1-800-771-3772 if you live in the United States. If you live somewhere else, you're out of luck, because that number only works in the U.S. market.

Do ratings work the way they were intended? Jeff Braun, the CEO of Maxis (makers of SimCity) was quoted as follows on page 161 of the 3/6/95 issue of *Microtimes* magazine:

I think that these ratings systems are crazy--did you know that Nintendo refused to use the word 'kill' or ever have blood in their Nintendo games, but now that they have ratings, their first game is called 'Killer Instinct' and has blood all over it? Because now they can put a ratings on it and get away with it. [The ratings system] justified the whole thing...

BTWIYCRTIAVI

I was flipping through *CompuServe* magazine and I happened to skim the "Dear Reader" section. That's the editor's introduction--it's one of those "What You're About To Read" columns that everybody skips. Anyway, I notice that the writer (Kassie Rose) used the abbreviation "BTW," which stands for "By The Way." It's a standard online abbreviation, but what is it doing in a paper publication? What's next, smiley faces? I don't know if this is the start of a trend. I hope not. I know my editor wouldn't let me use abbreviations, but when you *are* the editor, who's going to stop you?

Where Have All the Disk Vendors Gone?

A few months ago in this column, I speculated that shareware disk vendors might be on the way out, due to increased pressure from online services and CD-ROMs. Stephan Patterson (CompuServe/ZiffNet 70313,1071) studied the Association of Shareware Professional (ASP) rolls, and reported that while the author membership has dipped only slightly, the number of disk vendors has plummeted--from 404 in September of 1994 to 218 in January of 1995. I know that I am not getting as many vendors asking me for disks as I did last year. Times are changing!

DOOMed Civilizations

The other day, my friend Yves and I were discussing why the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) project has not yet found any radio broadcasts from far-distant solar systems. Yves suggested that maybe they don't care about talking to us--maybe they're playing DOOM!

Well, not DOOM exactly--for all we know, the aliens look like the giant purple head--but if you think such games are addictive right now, what do you think they will be like in 50 years? When entertainment becomes indistinguishable from the original experience, why bother with something so inconvenient as reality? Let the dog mow the lawn, I'm busy playing!

Games could become a serious sociological problem in future years, unless somebody figures out the cheat codes to life. Until then ... keep watching the skies!

Exeunt

Did you find the content and style of this column entertaining and informative? If neither, you can blame the fact that I have been feverish for the past two weeks, thanks to the Flu of the Month Club. You can contact me with no fear of germs by sending E-mail to 72241,2052 on CompuServe. All letters will receive a prompt response as soon as my temperature levels off.

Speaking of germs, my favorite TV series (i.e., anything by James Burke) mentions that the squalid crowding of cities was one of the main contributors to the plagues of the 19th century. I wonder how E-mail, telecommuting, and cocooning will affect our immune system? Before you answer, consider these disease vectors: banking machines and paper money, both of which provide cozy homes for bacteria.

Food for thought. Which reminds me ... I'd better eat something.

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Terry Hastings

Author of Digital Downs and the Ultimate game series

Author Profile

Name
Terry C. Hastings
My keywords
PLAYFUL, PILOT, SKINFLINT, TINKERER, INDEPENDENT, DREAMER
Computer system
Quantex Pentium; it makes lots of noise and goes real fast.
Typical programming hours
Most waking hours are spent in front of the old computer.
Favorite shareware program (not mine)
Blaster Master
Favorite programming snack & beverage
I only go for health food, that's why I usually choose Cheetos and Pepsi.
Marital status
Yes, for a long time now.
Did your marital status change after programming?
No, just our relationship. She now owns the company and I work for her!
Last non-computer book read
Airman's Information Manual
Other hobbies/interests
Home-built airplanes and modified sports cars
Favorite vacation spot
Las Vegas (I only go for the food!)
Favorite pizza topping
Canadian Bacon
What kind of car do you drive?
Datsun 280 ZX (it's old but it has character)
Daytime job
I do shareware full time now.
Predicted release date of Windows 95
My prediction is December 31, 1995, so they don't have to call it Windows 96.
The last place on earth anyone would find me
The local tavern
Words to live by
This must be deja vu all over again.

Biography

I was born in Washington State and raised on a dairy farm. After attending Washington State University, my wife and I set out on our first life adventure. We spent 20 years in the United States Air Force. I did duty as a fighter pilot, flying OV-10, F4, and F16 fighters in many places throughout the United States and the world.

I first became enamored by personal computers in 1979 when I saw an Apple computer that one of the squadron pilots had brought into the Squadron Weapons shop to help compute weapons scores and other information. The Air Force soon purchased Cromenco CPM machines for some of its offices, and I was hooked. I was able to afford my first "machine"--a Commodore 64--in 1982, and started tinkering with some programming endeavors soon after.

When I retired from the Air Force in 1991, it took me about a year to realize I was too old and set in my ways to be hired as a pilot by the commercial airlines. I certainly did not want to work for someone else, so I decided to give my computer expertise a whirl. Since I like to use my computer for entertainment as well as productivity, I decided to attempt to produce quality entertainment software. At the time, I was also attempting to learn how to intelligently play blackjack. This seemed to be the perfect opportunity to combine these two efforts. I wanted to develop animated games that were interactive and entertaining, as well as useful. I felt that a good game should have a subtle sense of humor to add to its overall appeal.

I tried to convey the light-hearted theme of my software through my company name. In 1993, I started Accidental Software ("If it's good, it's Accidental"), with my first software package, Ultimate Blackjack. I have since produced a gambling simulation for nearly every kind of major casino game.

Recently, I released my first Windows application, Image Master. I saw the need for a good software package that would easily allow anyone to use his or her favorite pictures along with their own MIDI music or CD-audio as a personalized screen saver or image viewer. I hope to soon release an inspirational version of Image Master with the cooperation and help of the Franciscan Cantile, Inc., and with fractal image compression by Iterated Systems, Inc.

If all goes according to plan, I'll be able to convert all my DOS software to Windows in the coming year. Since I don't want to take myself too seriously, I will most likely continue to concentrate my efforts in the entertainment field.

My gratitude goes out to the shareware industry for making it possible for small developers like myself to distribute our products. Without the shareware concept, many start-up software companies could not raise the necessary capital to launch a software product, and many unique and imaginative applications would be lost.

Two 'Ultimate' Games

Digital Downs

Blaster Master

Ultimate Craps

Ultimate Craps is a casino craps simulation that features animated players and a stick man. Appropriate player dialog is displayed as the game progresses. As you play against three computer players, you learn about bets and their odds, including place pass/come bets, field bets, hard number bets, and center table bets. Statistical tables detail bet results for the last roll of the dice, total number of bets with percentages, and total dollar amounts.

DOWNLOAD INFORMATION
COMPUSERVE: GO PBSARC, Library 13 (Simulations), and search for **ULTCRP.ZIP**
PRODIGY: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Search by Title"

Ultimate Poker

Ultimate Poker is a fast-paced animated poker game of five- or seven-card stud. You can choose the table stakes and the game speed. You can track bets, calls, raises, checks, and folds for rounds and players. Statistics show the winning record of the hands and how frequently they occur. Best move suggestions help you with your strategy. There are on-screen comments from the three other players, making this a very realistic simulation that will provide hours of entertainment.

DOWNLOAD INFORMATION
COMPUSERVE: GO PBSARC, Library 10 (Casino Games), and search for **UPOKER.ZIP**
PRODIGY: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Search by Title"

Author Spotlight

Digital Downs

Digital Downs is an animated horse racing simulation that is about as realistic as it gets outside of a   real track. Featuring excellent graphics, play is with your mouse. There are 10 stables and 1,000 horses, and nine race track lengths. Track conditions vary. You can bet the Daily Double, Win, Place, Show, Exacta, and Quennella. Watch the finish on the giant video screen. Play is for one until registered. There is SoundBlaster support. Requires 386 processor and a mouse and DOS 3.3.

DOWNLOAD INFORMATION
COMPUSERVE: GO PBSARC, Library 13 (Simulations), and search for **DDOWNS.ZIP**
PRODIGY: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Search by Title"

Author Spotlight

Blaster Master

Blaster Master lets you explore the world of digital sounds using SoundBlaster to edit sound files. It handles VOC, WAV, SND, and SAM files from a graphical interface, producing special effects such as fade, echo, mix, and looping. Written for SoundBlaster enthusiasts, Blaster Master provides features found on expensive audio workstations. This evaluation version processes only 25-second sound files. This version adds bug fixes and a tutorial file.

DOWNLOAD INFORMATION
COMPUSERVE: GO PBSSTU, Library 3 (Multimedia Tools), and search for **BMSTR.ZIP**
PRODIGY: [JUMP] ZIFFNET and Select Software Library, then "Search by Title"

Author Spotlight

Andrew Jackson (1767-

7th President of the United States (182

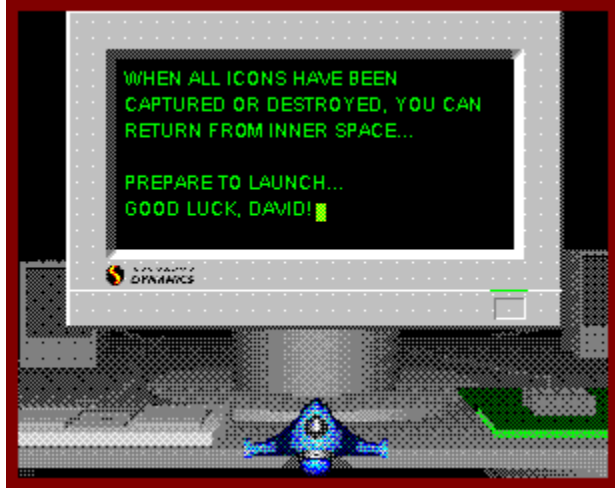|	
Birthplace	Born in the Waxhaw settlement of South C March 15, 1767.
Parents	Andrew and Elizabeth (Hutchinson) Jacksc
Ancestry	Scotch-Irish.
Height	6 feet, 1 inch.
Religion	Presbyterian.
Political Party	Democratic.
Family	Married Rachel Donelson Robards (1767-1 They had no children.
Died	June 8, 1845, in Nashville, Tennessee.
Signature	*Andrew Jackson*

IMPORTANT EVENTS DURING JACKSON'S ADMINISTRATION

1828 Jackson was elected President after defeating John Quincy Adams.

1830 On January 19, the Daniel Webster and Robert Hayne debate began. Hayne argued that right to nullify a federal law and refuse to obey it if found to be unconstitutional. Webster

WHEN ALL ICONS HAVE BEEN
CAPTURED OR DESTROYED, YOU CAN
RETURN FROM INNER SPACE...

PREPARE TO LAUNCH...
GOOD LUCK, DAVID!

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Print for future reference