

# OTTAWA PC NEWS

Vol. 10 No. 4

The Newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG)

April 1993

## Review of March meeting

### DOS 6: I came, I saw, I doubted

by Jackson Hibler

**T**here is no doubt that every part of DOS 6 will be crawled over and prodded in the coming months, considering we got the product for free. (Thank you, Microsoft: ed.) By the time you read this, many of my doubts may have been put to rest...or realized in spades. To see what I mean, let's run through some of the highlights featured at the March 30 extravaganza.

#### DBLSPACE

Integrated compression came earlier to the Mac and late to the PC. Stacker has proved compression can be done quite well on the PC. But so far, only a small percentage of users have actually bought the idea and the product. Now it appears Microsoft has bought the technology and will re-sell it to us with DOS 6. Will DoubleSpace shrink and expand our programs and files on the fly without an unacceptable delay? Will we be able to run OS/2 in dual boot mode on a compressed disk? (All the manual really wants to talk about is how to remove OS/2.) Will we be able to unwind our compressed disks if we decide this is not what we want after all? Will the housekeeping utilities

be sufficient? The devil is always in the details...

One thing is clear, however: if we invoke DBLSPACE at installation, we will be thrown holus-bolus into the daily use of what amounts to a new file system. And there's no going back to DOS 5 after. Good luck to us!

#### SMARTDRV

Write-back caching, a winner, arrived with Windows 3.1. Write-back caching software works so well it has blown expensive, multi-megabyte caching controller boards out of the market. Oh, there were a few things we had to learn like not write-back-caching floppy disks and not rebooting before flushing the cache but on balance, it's a wonderful advance. (It's interesting to note that Microsoft recommends you use SMARTDRV instead of RAMDRIVE for almost every purpose.) Now we will get it as part of the DOS 6 suite of utilities—correctly tweaked to handle compressed data, we are told. I'm pretty sanguine about this one.

#### MEMMAKER

Automated memory management: One of QEMM's best features has been the ability to identify each segment of free upper memory and let the user choose which programs to

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put into each. No more fiddling with device and TSR calling order in CONFIG.SYS and AUTO-EXEC.BAT. Just tell 'em where to go. That power exacted the price of careful study of QEMM's command arcana (some pages of those) but was worth it when RAM-cram was tight. And QEMM would automate the process if you wished.



*Check the envelope in case it contains a new membership card or disk of the month card*

*Continued on page 7*



## OPCUG Disk-of-the-Month reaches 100th issue

by Norman Dafoe

**D**id you know that the OPCUG Disk-of-the-Month is almost **ONE HUNDRED** months old! Yep, DOM # 100 will be coming out in May 1993 (DOM # 1 was issued in March 1983). I would like to make this **Disk-of-the-Decade** a bumper issue, a high-density disk filled with past favourites as well as super new items. But I need your help in picking the very best of the previous 99 diskettes.

### What do you want?

Let me know which of the hundreds of programs you found on any of the DOMs that you still use and find useful. I am looking for new and old PC Magazine Utilities, small games, text files, whatever, that you feel warrant being included on our OPCUG Hall of Fame Disk-of-the-Decade. I will try to look for the latest versions of any programs included. To help you remember the exact name of that great little program, what's-its-name, download the PCUG.ZIP listing from the PUB.

### Please communicate with me

I really want to hear from you, so do not hesitate to contact me:

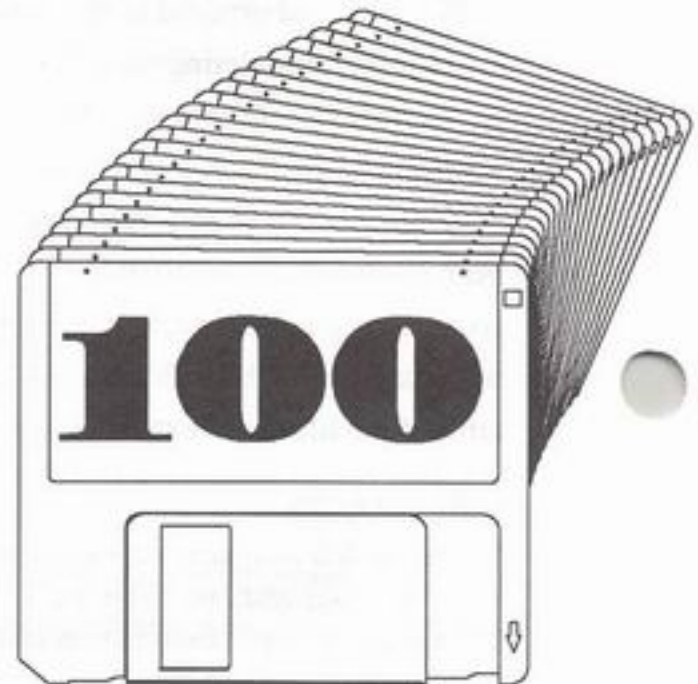
- on the PUB, as NORMAN DAFOE, not NORM
- at the regular April meeting
- by telephone, evening or weekend, at 723-1909

If any member suggests three or more programs that I actually use, I

will award him or her a free disk from the library!

### CIA—a popular choice

The new disks for **March 1993** were well received by the large number of members present to see and hear (!#@) about MS-DOS 6. As usual the latest **BIG GAME PACK # 7**, which included Solar



Winds #1 and Major Stryker #1, quickly sold out. Another popular item was the **CIA World Facts Book 1992**, a hypertext collection of current data on almost every country in the world. Curiously, **ProtoCAD 3D v1.10a** did not sell well, although I thought it looked to be interesting. Gamers responded well to **Zone 66**, a super arcade-style game set in space, with great graphics & sound, as well as **World Empire II for Windows**, a RISK-type game of world domination.

There will be lots of new disks for the April meeting. Come by the Software Librarian's desk and take a look!

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# A touch of glass

by Julie Dustin

**W**ordPerfect Corporation, staying beside or ahead of its competitors especially you-know-who, has added a window-like interface (but it's not Windows, more like invisible glass) to its latest product. It's WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS with new and improved features. Come see the newest version as well as WordPerfect Presentations for DOS 2.0 on April 27.

Jamie Simzer, WordPerfect's local area manager and software engineer notes, "The computing world has moved 100% into the graphical environment. We want to provide products with an intuitive graphical interface with or without Windows."

## Improvements welcome

"WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS has many of the same features as WordPerfect for Windows, including multiple open documents (up to 9 at a time), pull-down menus, and button bars" he adds, "but the new features are great too. This product has spreadsheet capabilities, including 100 spreadsheet operators, a grammar-checking program called Grammatik 5.0 accessible from the pull-down menu, better database conditional searches (thank you!!:ed), and collapsible outlines."

## Fixes and faxes

Some of the other features are already available in WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows but you should take a look at them. I was very impressed by the Quick Finder's ability to index

and then retrieve files by conditions. Yes, you could do searches through the List Files menu previously, but the speed and span of these searches are much better. You can now send your memo directly to a fax instead of a printer with the function keys—without losing your fonts. And for all you macro programmers, the new macro language supports the 5.1 macros. I think I'll take the show-me-I'm-from-Missouri stance on the macros for awhile.

Simzer says, "Our ship date is June with upgrade price available."

## Presentations

The 2nd product to be shown will be WordPerfect Presentations for DOS 2.0. This product has been available since late last year and is a presentation graphics application also with an invisible window-like interface.

Simzer says, "Some of these features have never been in a DOS application before. The outliner tools organize text. You enter your own text or import outlines created in WP 5.1. Other features include a master gallery, a slide sorter, screen effects, sound (incl. MIDI), speaker notes and paint tools with auto-tracing of bit-map to vector-based images."

Jamie Simzer will be available to answer questions about WordPerfect Office 4.0 and WordPerfect InForms 1.0, an electronic forms processing package.

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## Calendar (subject to change)

**General Meeting Location:** Sir Robert Borden HS  
131 Greenbank Road

**General Meeting Time:** 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Date and Time	Topic and Location
Tuesday, 27 April	See this page
Tuesday, 25 May	<b>5th Dimension</b> will show presentation hardware. <b>Intel</b> are to introduce PENTIUM



**T**he next FOX Sig meeting is on the 22nd April at 7:00 pm. It is to be held in the JeanTalon Conference room, Jean Talon Building, Statistics Canada, Tunney's Pasture. NEON Software are to demonstrate FOX EXPRESS.



# Virus protection with DOS 6

## Battling viruses with DOS 6.0

by Julie Dustin

**N**ow that you can have anti-virus protection built into DOS 6.0, what do you know about viruses. Do you have enough protection? What does it protect against? A number of books have been written about computer viruses and the media are using actual or rumored virus outbreaks as another disaster story, which we all know sells the newspapers! Don't panic. Remember the words of Jean-Luc Picard from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*; "The road from legitimate suspicion to rampant paranoia is short indeed."

A computer virus is only one of many things that can attack your computer and change or destroy the information stored on it. I use the word "information" to cover everything that exists in binary form on the computer and its components, including hard drives, floppy diskettes, and even magnetic tapes. This does NOT include read-only information such as your hardware setup (CMOS).

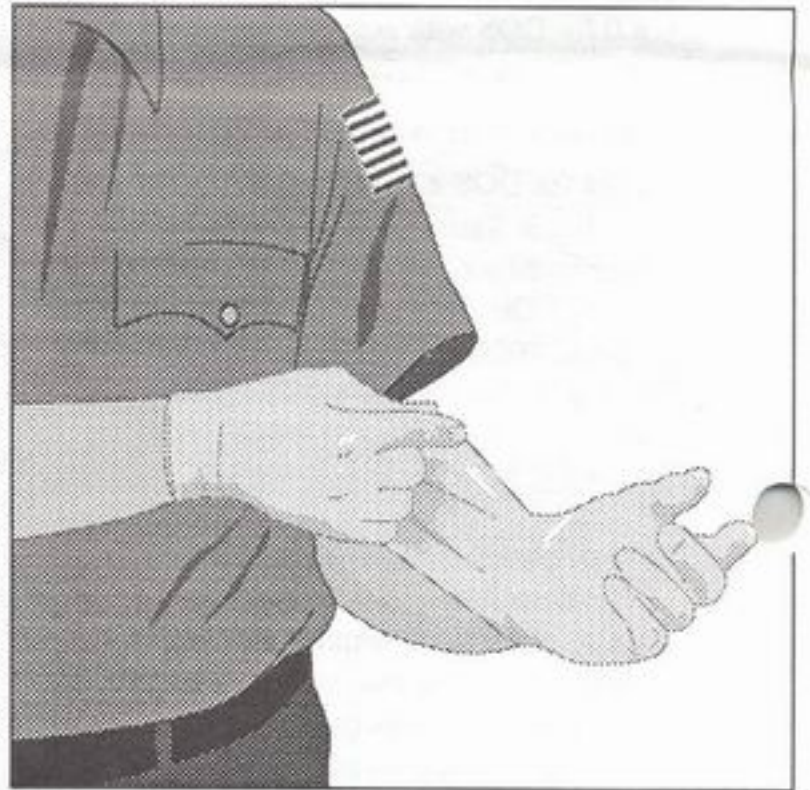
### DOS 6.0 offerings

DOS 6.0 now includes a virus scanner and terminate-stay-resident (TSR) program that you can use in the DOS or Windows environment. The code is a stripped-down version of Central Point's Anti-virus software which ranked number one

(along with Norton Anti-Virus) in PC Magazine (March 16, 1993).

### Families of viruses

Is the destruction of data due only to viruses? It depends. Would you classify in the virus category a user who accidentally formats a hard drive, a software programmer who embeds extra code in a pro-



gram to allow secret access through a "backdoor", or badly-written software. If so, then to protect yourself and your organization against viruses, the procedures become more complicated. One must always balance the time taken to prevent data destruction against the time it would take to restore the lost data.

### More or less?

The National Computer Security Association (NCSA) estimated that six new viruses are written every day. Robert Bales, executive director of NCSA in 1992, felt that with the availability of new tools for writing viruses, less skilled people can

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create viruses. The increasing number of PC users alone is a good reason to assume that more viruses will appear. Other organizations, like the USA Research Inc. of Portland, OR, estimated that the number of viruses attacking PCs and Macintoshes would decrease. The institute's report showed that the average damage incurred by viruses in the U.S. is just over \$800 U.S. per infected computer.

### **Weight the costs**

Anti-virus software is necessary. However, an organization should research the costs of buying, maintaining, supporting, and training of the software. Instituting a regular backup of each user's data files and occasional backups of the application software and customized configuration files may prove more useful than the anti-virus software.

### **Categories of mean, evil, twisted software**

Often called "rogue" software, these categories include true viruses, buggy software, time or logic bombs, disguised software called Trojan horses or chameleons, worms, or replicators. The dictionary's definition of the word "rogue" includes a rascal, a wag or a mischievous person. A true virus is a set of instructions which will modify your files or system configuration and enable the file to copy itself onto another file, disk, or into memory.

### **Using DOS 6.0 for protection**

- Use VSAFE, the DOS TSR anti-virus, in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file and update it regularly for new viruses. VSAFE, by default, checks for hard drive formatting, all executable files when opened by DOS, and boot sectors. It protects against writes to the hard drive boot sector and its partition table. To increase the defaults, add switches to the line in AUTOEXEC.BAT.
- Install MSAV, the DOS scanning program, in the AUTOEXEC.BAT file to search the local drives immediately when powered on. The options here include checksums, reports, automatic detection prompts, anti-stealth checks (these kinds of viruses cause paranoia), and making backups of infected files before DOS tries to clean them.
- Educate and train users how and when to scan diskettes and new files.
- Put write-protected tabs on all essential diskettes. Do not use transparent tape. This protects the diskette from having any viruses sneak onto it. However, if it is infected already it is a carrier!
- Print out the virus list from DOS before a virus strikes. It's better to have information on what virus you

are dealing with on paper. Your computer should not be used until the virus is cleaned.

- Make yourself a bootable emergency diskette with the MSAV commands on it. The computer must be booted with this diskette in case VSAFE reports a virus in memory. To clear it out of RAM, power off the computer (DO NOT use Ctl+Alt+Del) to reboot. Reboot with the emergency diskette, then detect and clean the drive(s).

### **Keeping up to date with new viruses**

To obtain the signatures of new viruses, you can consult the free BBS (long distance charges are extra) operated by Central Point Software, Inc. for Microsoft DOS 6.0 customers. The DOS manual, see Appendix D, gives step-by-step instructions for calling and signing on as a new user to this BBS. Appendix D also covers procedures for downloading the signatures. At the time of writing, no signature viruses were available, however. Once downloaded, the virus signature files should be uncompressed, scanned, and placed in the DOS sub-directory.

Updates will become available via diskette and from various bulletin boards. Another option is to register for automatic updates with Microsoft. Virus signatures obtained from other anti-virus software companies are not compatible with DOS 6.0.

CompuServe also offers a Central Point Software forum with information and downloadable files on new viruses.





## Protection against computer viruses

by Eric Clyde

**A** computer virus is a program which hides its intent and infects other computer programs, modifying them to do things you do not want. While some viruses are pranks, many can do serious damage to your other programs and may make your data unusable. There are over a thousand identified viruses which can infect IBM compatible microcomputers, although most are not widespread.

### How are viruses spread?

Like the human variety, a computer virus is spread through contact with an infected source, i.e. a previously infected program or disk. It may be introduced into your computer by using a floppy disk from another computer, or by downloading an infected file from a poorly monitored bulletin board, or by using a floppy disk with an infected boot sector. Even commercial software can be infected—a problem has recently surfaced in the U.S. where stores have been found to be repackaging returned commercial software, leading to the possibility of virus infection. At least one local supplier sells floppy disks very cheaply—these turn out to be “recycled”, i.e. previously used! (If you use such disks, check them as shown below). Also, if your computer has had to be repaired, it is not unknown for the repairman’s software diagnostic disks, which are used on many machines, to become infected, thus spreading the problem.

### How do viruses work?

Viruses normally infect “executable” files, i.e. those with the extensions “.com” or “.exe”, but other file types may be infected. They try to spread as far as possible before a problem becomes obvious, sometimes on or after a certain date, e.g., the Michelangelo virus was to activate March 6th, 1992. One type hides itself somewhere in memory and infects other programs as they are run; another type infects the boot record of the hard disk or floppy disk, and modifies the directory table that shows the location of files so that the virus is run before the desired program. The newest type, the so-called Stealth or Polymorphic virus, can hide the modifications it has made to the file or boot record so that the virus cannot be detected by antivirus software, unless the latter is used from a write protected bootable floppy! Remember also that the perpetrators of viruses are very smart, and are continually trying to defeat virus detection programs. So don’t depend on such a program more than two or three months old.

### How do I minimize the risk of getting infected?

- If your original program disks are not “write protected”, write protect them.
- Prepare a bootable floppy disk. Use the latest virus detection software (see below) to ensure it is clean, and then copy your virus detection software to it. If there is enough space on the disk, virus removal software (see below) should also be on the disk: if not, prepare another virus-free disk

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with the removal software on it. Write protect the disk(s).

- Scan every program you load on your computer before you use it for the first time. (For archived files, e.g. those with extension ".ZIP", I recommend unarchiving (e.g. PKUNZIPing them to an empty subdirectory, then scanning them).
- Regularly scan your entire hard disk for viruses. To be sure, you should use the bootable floppy mentioned above.
- If your computer is repaired, use the bootable floppy to check for viruses before you do anything else.
- Remember that even the best anti-virus program may not be capable of detecting new viruses, so use the latest version. Remember that they are themselves programs, so they also can be infected.

### What if I find a virus on my machine?

If you follow the practices recommended above, you should detect a virus before it can do much damage. If you wait, you may do irreparable damage to your data. As soon as you think something may be wrong, reboot your computer using the write protected bootable floppy and SCAN the hard disk. Hopefully, it is a false alarm, but if not, and the antivirus software is recent enough, the virus will be identified and, frequently, it may be removed by using the CLEAN program (see below).

### What anti-virus program should I use?

PC Magazine (March 16th, 1993) evaluated the major commercial programs, or you can use the virus software supplied with DOS 6.0. You can also download the excellent McAfee shareware program, SCAN, from the PUB—it is in the Applications/Virus Detection area, and is called SCANV102.ZIP. Also download the file CLEAN102.ZIP from the same area.

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Setting up EMM386 has required a lot of trial and error and it is just less capable of squeezing those last few kilobytes into upper memory. For most practical purposes, however, DOS 5's EMM386 has been "good enough". Now we are told we can have QEMM-like power and automation in DOS 6. If MEMMAKER can deliver more control without exacting too high a price in complexity, it will be well received.

### Another import from Windows

MSDiagnostics is coupled with the ability to allow the choice of multiple configurations within CONFIG.SYS. We can also single-step through it or, when things go badly wrong, bypass both the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT at bootup. This utility adds up to a decent suite of configuration tools that may be the best part of DOS 6, if not the most glamorous.

### MSBACKUP

DOS 5 broke the ice by incorporating Central Point's Undelete. We only got a subset of that stand-alone product, but it worked well—about time! Now it looks like they've called in another expert to fix hard disk backup, Norton Backup. Mind you, MSBACKUP will only support backups to floppies. Even with compression, our expanding hard disks will fill a heck of a lot of 'em. This one may turn out to be good, but not very useful without tape support.

### Virus protection

MSAV, a tough one to call! Most users don't bother. Oh, they worry but they don't bother. The ones that do bother are like our sysop—he bothers so we don't have to—or they are like me. I bother because I think it is prob-

able that I will need to bother. Those of us who bother keep up with what works best and what doesn't. First impressions of the virus monitor (VSAFE) are that it probably won't do a very good job...but then, most TSR virus monitors are pretty poorly regarded. First reports on MSAV's scanner are that, although it doesn't work quite as well as F-Prot or Macafee's SCAN, it does work. The trouble with scanners is that they are always out of date. By definition, they can only look for what has already been found in the someone's machine and then documented. We are, however, promised a (toll) BBS to obtain new virus signatures as they are discovered.

And finally, there's the cleaner. At the moment it seems MSAV cannot clean out all that its scanner finds. But updates for the cleaner will be obtainable by subscription too.

### Somewhere to start

In the case of their third party imports (Undelete, Backup, DoubleSpace) DOS offers a plain vanilla version. Perhaps not state-of-the-art but good enough for the main task. With anti-virus software, even state-of-the-art is not good enough! No one claims to do this job perfectly, but now Microsoft proposes to link their version to the operating system. This approach may shield naive users from the complexities of the task only to encourage them to risk infections that they have prudently avoided in the past. If Microsoft can only offer imperfect virus protection, it will soon find itself lambasted for each failure to prevent, detect or clean up this world-full of viruses. It might look like a licence to print money — all those \$10 updates. But one way or another, one carries the bucket for what one sells. This could backfire badly!

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## Ottawa PC News

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in June and July.

### Deadline

Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month prior to publication.

### Mailing Address

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Nepean, Ontario K2G 1S6  
Telephone Answering Machine 723-1329  
PUB (BBS) 8N1 2400 bps 228-0665  
PUB (BBS) 8N1 9600 bps 228-1247  
PUB (BBS) 8N1 14.4 kbps 228-8550

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Chris Taylor 723-1329

### Hardware/Software Broker

No appointment

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Herb Kelland 733-4259

### Group Meetings

OPCUG meets monthly except in June and July. Check the answering machine, the PUB and the newsletter for the date and place of each meeting. Meeting times are 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

### Membership fees

\$25 per year

### Disk-of-the-Month

\$25 for 5.25 ins. diskettes and \$35 per year for 3.5 ins. (for 10 diskettes)

### Printed by

Zippy Print  
227 Rideau Street (at Cumberland)  
Ottawa, Ont. K1N 5X8  
Tel: 236-0340

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## Beware the unknown?

There are more goodies in DOS 6—like INTERLNK which looks to be a cross between Laplink and PC Anywhere—that will have to be explored to evaluate. Unless you are compelled by circumstances, however, proceed with caution. DOS 5 is charted territory, DOS 6 is not.

I hope DOS 6 turns out to be worth more than the price we all paid for it at the roll-out. But it could wind up costing us a whole lot more!

P.S. wonderful projection screen setup by 5th Dimension.

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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Membership #  
(if you are renewing)

First name

Last name (please use caps.)

Address

Apt. #

City

Province

Postal Code

Country

( )

( )

( )

Home phone #

Business phone #

Fax #

I use the following hardware:

☐ XT ☐ AT-286 ☐ 386 ☐ 486

(Check those that apply.)

☐ 300 baud modem ☐ 1200 baud modem

☐ VGA ☐ EGA ☐ Herc.

☐ 2400 baud modem ☐ 9600 baud modem

I would like to help in the following club activities:

(Check those that apply.)

☐ Programming instruction

☐ Hardware techniques

☐ Newsletter input

☐ Software library

☐ Promotion/Publicity

☐ Bulletin Board

☐ Other

I use the following software:

MEMBERSHIP FEE \$ 25.00

Disk of the month subscription

(\$25/yr. for 5.25" or \$35/yr for 3.5" 10 disks per year)

Cheque ☐ Cash ☐ TOTAL \$

Mail to: Ottawa PC Users' Group  
3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ont. K2G 1S6