

# THE WORLD OF CYBERSPACE

## **The Major News Supplement for Consumer Systems**

**Fall 1994**

### **New Game Connection Software Lets Users Play Modem Games Via The Major BBS**

by Dihan Rosenburg  
Managing Editor

Interactive virtual reality comes to BBSes with the advent of Game Connection by Sirius Software, Inc., the new game-link software that plugs into The Major BBS.

"Now users can play Doom, F-15 Strike Eagle III, Empire Deluxe, Spectre VR, and other tremendously popular head-to-head and multiplayer modem games online," says Scott Brinker, President and CEO. "They can log on to the BBS and instantly find two or three worthy opponents to pit their skills against."

"Game Connection is revolutionary because now you can play multiplayer modem games supporting more than two simultaneous users without either a LAN or several incoming lines and modems," adds Judy Struempf, Vice President of Sirius Software. "Even the large commercial online services don't have this capability."

*continued on page 7*

### **What's new with you?**

In reading through *The World of Cyberspace*, you'll see that our third-party developers are doing a lot of cool stuff! That's why we're devoting this new supplement to keeping you up to date with the latest products of our 150+ TPDs.

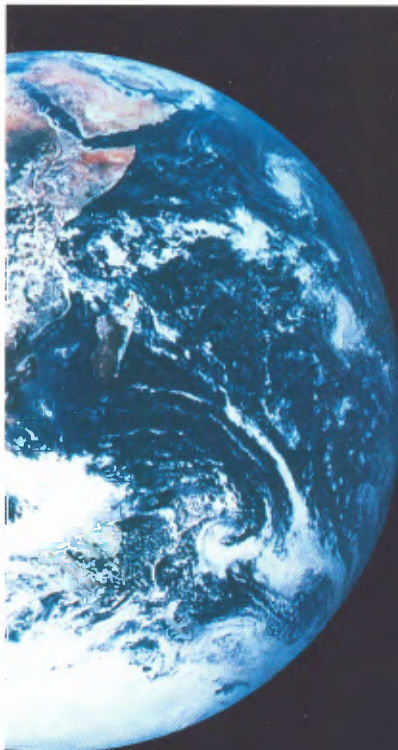
We also want to turn the spotlight on you. As Major BBS Sysops, you've been doing some amazing things — from designing virtual communities with RIPaint to running your own online stores. We'd like to share some of the fantastic things you've been doing in our "Sysop Spotlight."

This column will feature a Sysop, like yourself, who is blazing new trails in cyberspace. If you've marketed your online service in creative ways, implemented an innovative theme for your system, discovered a revolutionary way to use The Major BBS, or learned about a new audience for your online service, we'd love to hear about it.

Just send e-mail via our Demo System to "Dihan Rosenburg" or to [dihan@gcomm.com](mailto:dihan@gcomm.com) on the Internet. We look forward to hearing from you!

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# Cybervision Commentary

by Scott Brinker  
President/CEO

The interactive market is here today. Why wait for the cable companies to wire fiber to your home, or for Microsoft to control your TV? Over 20 million consumers own modems and PCs today, and they're eager to taste the adventures of cyberspace.

You can thank Prodigy, CompuServe, and America Online for investing a few million dollars in mass advertising. They've gotten the general public intrigued by this notion of using their home computers to zoom around the globe electronically. But sooner or later — and usually sooner — their subscribers get bored and go looking for the real thing.

You're the real thing.

Think about it. From a consumer entertainment perspective, what is the most exciting aspect of your system? People. Multiplayer games and chat extravaganzas thrive because of the diversity of real human beings on the other end of the phone line. And a local online service, run by a small, dynamic entrepreneurial company, can beat the big boys on this hands down.

For example, take an hour of CB Simulator on CompuServe. Sure, there's plenty of text scrolling across your screen from cryptic names, but you have a dim sense of distance from it all. In your subconscious, you know that those words are being written by people hundreds of miles away, and more than likely, you will never meet one of them in your life. It gives the conversation a rather abstract property that, at a very deep level, takes away from the excitement.

But spend an hour in the action teleconference of a local, 32-line BBS, and you're in for a treat. Knowing that the person on the other end of the line lives within a 50-mile radius changes everything. Personalities start to shine through. Real friendships develop. Get-togethers give everyone a chance to enjoy a Sunday picnic or a night on the town — and in the process cross all the usual social boundaries that typically prevent us from meeting new and different people from all walks of life.

In addition, you can tailor your service to the specific interests of your community: a bilingual interface, a weekend event calendar, interviews online of local personalities, forums for clubs and volunteer organizations, job classifieds, apartments for rent, and so on. Use your imagination, and listen to your callers. With a little creativity, you can quickly provide a wealth of regional features and information — something your users cannot find on CompuServe or America Online.

If you haven't read the "guerrilla marketing" books by Jay Conrad Levinson, get them. They're packed full of marketing and P.R. tactics for small businesses to win big on a low budget — and many of them will apply. Get those write-ups in local papers. Go on the air with radio talk shows. Speak at community meetings. Post flyers around at school campuses. Give coupons at

computer stores. Offer a "free-time" weekend once a year. You don't have to spend a lot of money to gather customers and mind share — you just have to put your heart and mind into it. The national online services can't match your intense presence on the local scene.

No matter how much the geography of online interaction changes over the years to come, remember: content is what it's all about. Whether you deliver it over phone lines or fiber-optic cable is largely a matter of technical semantics. The important thing is to carve out your niche in cyberspace, keep it fresh and dynamic, and make the customer #1.

And while you're succeeding wildly in that direction, you can count on Galacticom and our alliance of third-party developers to keep the technology of your platform state-of-the-art. We're all in a wonderful business together. Enjoy..!

(P.S. I'm not the only one who thinks BBSes are the forerunner of interactive television (ITV). I've been following a bi-weekly report on *Information & Interactive Services* for some time. Imagine my surprise when the July 29, 1994 issue arrived and a lead story was on The Major BBS and *Game Connection!* The editor elaborated on the power of multiplayer games to the consumer market, and pointed out that even the "big guys" don't have this yet.)



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## Visa's New Policy May Affect Your BBS

by Dean Kerl  
DataSafe Publications

If you charge your users for time on your BBS, you may be subject to additional fees by Visa International. Visa has determined that "inbound teleservices" are high risks and subject to registration fees. These fees include a one-time fee of \$500 and an annual fee of \$250. Inbound teleservices include all computer service networks and electronic bulletin boards that charge per call or for actual connect time. BBSes that operate strictly on a membership basis are not considered inbound teleservices.

If you register your BBS as an inbound teleservice merchant, you will need to provide a toll free number that will be printed on your cardholder statements. This 800 number will appear on your statement in place of your city and state.

- If you charge for time on your BBS, you can do one of the following:
  - 1. Continue to accept Visa credit cards and pay the required fees.
  - 2. Stop accepting Visa and MasterCard. (Visa and MasterCard policies require merchants who accept one of these credit cards to accept the other card as well.)
  - 3. Switch to a subscription-based billing system on an annual, quarterly, or monthly basis to avoid these fees.
- Tim Pfeiffer of Teleflora Creditline confirmed that the new fees will apply to systems charging for credits in advance or billing on an hourly or per-minute basis. BBSes that charge on a per-year or per-month basis will not be affected by these new fees.
- Teleflora has already notified customers who may be subject to the new fees. However, some other processors have not instituted the new fees yet. Both Card Services International and Electronic Card Systems have not yet notified existing customers of Visa's new policies.
- For now, these new regulations and fees apply to U.S. merchants only.

# Teleconference Games!

Without a doubt, Teleconference is the most popular area on your BBS, and Teleconference games add spice and variety to keep your users on-line even longer. These games add value to your most important asset - the Teleconference! Jabberwocky pioneered the tele-game concept with Gunfighter and later Food Fight. We are the leading developer of Teleconference Games, and you'll find our products stable, full-featured, as well as the *only* ones that work in both the Standard and Entertainment Teleconference. Download fully functional demos from our BBS at (301)498-6183 and see what the rage is all about!

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### Food Fight

Your users are hungry for Teleconference games, and there's nothing like a wild and messy food fight to satisfy them. They'll go bananas as ANSI food images actually cover their screens!

### GunFighter

Starting off with a couple of guns and some ammo, players gain improved fighting abilities as they compete to be "Top Gun". One minute, the same boring chit-chat, the next, a full-fledged brawl!

### The Doctor

The Doctor is an AI *Interactive* teleconference personality. Your BBS can have its own electronic Rogerian psychotherapist!

### Teleconference Trivia

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## Sysop Spotlight: BBSing in Germany

by Michael A. Weigel  
TerraComm Systems

My love of BBSing began in the United States while I attended school in Boston. I was an active participant and Forum Operator on the Argus Computerized Exchange BBS, a large system that runs The Major BBS. I had great fun and made a lot of new friends online.

The positive experience I had BBSing in the U.S. persuaded me to start my own BBS when I returned to my home in West Berlin, Germany. I've discovered a world of difference between the two countries in their online activity.

We're a step ahead of the U.S. in building an information superhighway — we've already integrated television and BBSes! The Sysop runs his BBS at the TV station, and the camera takes screen shots of the computer monitor.

The Teleconference is broadcast over television beginning at midnight. Callers can participate by:

- calling the BBS with their modem, calling the Sysop on their voice phone, and
- faxing their comments. The camera will break away from the Teleconference at various intervals and broadcast a screen of the faxed messages.
- At the same time, the Sysop is taking calls by voice phone. Viewers watching the show can listen to these callers while they read the Teleconference and fax screens. The whole thing is like a visual talk radio show!
- Most BBSes have only one or two lines, with high-speed modems for fast file transfer. File downloading is the most popular BBS activity here. A large portion of BBSes are linked with several message networks like FidoNet, or the MagicNet. BBSes connected to networks are always in demand, and stand-alone BBSes aren't successful unless they have some other outstanding feature.
- Networking is popular in Germany because the TELEKOM, our telephone company, has expensive rates — even for local calls. BBS users can save money by using networks. They pay only a small local phone charge and a nominal NetMail fee from the BBS Sysop.
- Another difference is that multi-user text adventures aren't as popular in Germany as they are in the U.S. — perhaps it's because there haven't been as many games written in our language. I've edited all of my menus and text messages into German. My next step will be to translate the text in the games.

*continued on page 14*

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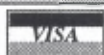
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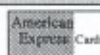
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