

The Major News

Volume IV Issue 1

For Operators of The Major BBS

Summer 1993

Version 6.1: Coming Soon to a BBS Near You

By Sheri Robert
Editor-in-Chief

Head any rumors lately about a new version of The Major BBS? As you probably know, we don't usually discuss new developments before the products are ready to ship. But this time, we had something way too exciting to keep completely under wraps.

A few months ago, we announced an alliance that we formed with two other companies: TeleGrafix Communications, Inc. and deltaComm Development. This alliance was intended to foster interest and development in a graphical solution to the most popular text-based BBS (The Major BBS) and shareware terminal program (Telix).

Last year at ONE BBSCON, we were lucky enough to have a sneak preview of a project that one of our third-party developers had been working on for quite some time. This new endeavor was called RIPscrip (Remote Imaging Protocol) and would soon

become the most exciting graphical user interface for text-based BBSes that the industry had yet seen. The user's part of the graphics solution is RIPterm, a graphical terminal package that can be used to call into BBSes with RIP or ANSI menus.

Using the new multi-lingual/multi-protocol architecture built into the BBS (see article below), and our new RIPscrip Add-on Option, Sysops can design graphical menus for their BBSes. The RIPscrip Add-on Option (list price \$249) offers the RIPaint tool and manual from TeleGrafix; the .DLL, which will allow a seamless integration with The Major BBS's configuration utility, CNF; and some sample screens to get your BBS up and running with graphics, ASAP.

If you'd like to try this RIP stuff out, just call into the Demo System at (305) 583-7808, download a copy of RIPterm from the BBSV6SHR LIB in the file library, then call back into the Demo System. After logging in, type "/GO RIP". Have fun!



"Doors" on The Major BBS?

By Ken Nash
Technical Support Engineer

Yes! The Major BBS is now doors-capable. Doors are specialized programs available to the online BBS user. There are literally hundreds of them available and can include applications such as spreadsheets or databases, utility programs, or even online games.

Many of these programs are entertainment-oriented shareware and can usually be found in quantity on larger BBSes. Some may require a small registration fee for usage.

Most door programs are written specifically to run with a BBS, but ANSI/text-based DOS applications can also be configured to run as a door, such as Lotus 1-2-3, dBase, etc. With this in mind you can see that a whole new world has opened up for The Major BBS Sysop.

Continued on page 7

Multilingual BBSing Offers a World of Opportunities

By Bob Stein
Writer/Developer

Version 6.1 of The Major BBS now supports up to 50 user-languages simultaneously. For example, a German-speaking user could be online seeing prompts and menus in German, while an English-speaking person sees English menus and prompts on his screen, and a French user sees French.

But there are a few things that the multilingual feature does *not* do. It doesn't translate user-input messages. A Spanish-speaking teleconference user could get prompts and help messages in Spanish, but if she's chatting with another teleconference user who only speaks Italian, she'll get his messages in Italian — they'll be on they're own trying to understand each other. Also, the standard BBS only comes with English messages.

Version 6.1 includes the *architecture* for multiple simultaneous languages, but we haven't done any of the translating ourselves. This makes it possible for third-party developers to create Alternate Language Add-on Options that any Sysop of The Major BBS can purchase and install on his BBS.

This is in line with our strategy at Galacticomm of putting power and opportunities into the hands of enterprising third-party developers. We're actively supporting and recruiting third-party participation in multilingual opportunities. The doors are wide open. (See related article on page 15.)

Perhaps I should clarify the distinction between Sysop translations and user translations...

Sysop translations are developed for selling The Major BBS in markets where the

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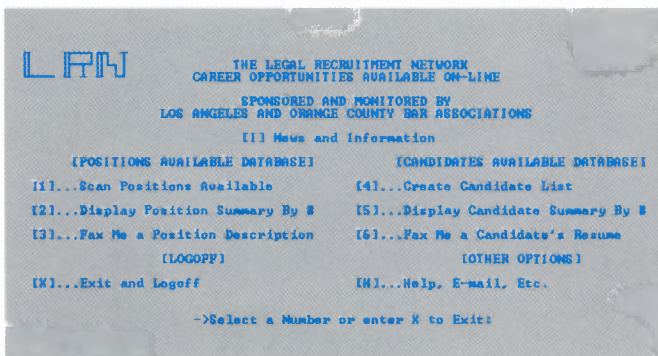
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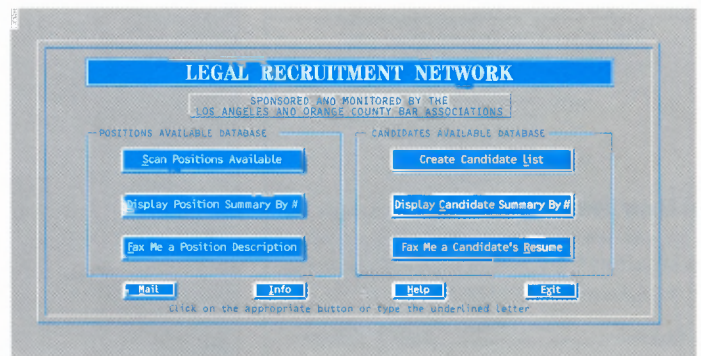
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Multilingual BBSing (cont'd. from page 1)

Sysops speak a language other than English. These translations include all text that The Major BBS displays to users, as well as the words on the screens at the Sysop's console, and the entire *System Operations Manual*. Sysop translations have been going on for a number of years now (the German version started shipping in 1990) and they require special contracts with advance royalty payments.

User translations are newly possible with Version 6.1 of The Major BBS. User translations involve only the text that BBS users see on their terminals. On any one BBS there may be many user-languages available simultaneously. (The Sysop console remains in the BBS's native language, which of course depends on where you bought your BBS — it's in English from Galacticom, for example.) User translations may be packaged and sold to any Sysop of The Major BBS (Version 6.1 or later) for integration into his BBS.

Remember, all text stored in .MSG files for The Major BBS is copyrighted material. Please contact us at (305) 583-5990 about license agreements that would allow you to

sell translated versions of the text in The Major BBS.

Another set of multilingual possibilities includes talking to different types of users in different ways. You might want to create languages like Tutorial, Expert, Staff, or Novice to make things easier or more efficient for these special groups.

One aspect of the multilingual feature is that an alternate language doesn't have to be complete. You could, for example, design a language specifically for certain customers, so that a few prompts in the Electronic Mail service appear with special suggestions. All of the other prompts would appear in standard English.

Other possibilities for Alternate Language Add-on Options include whimsical variations on English, such as trekkie, valley-girl, English-butler, jive, new-yawker, southern-drawl, 4-year-old-child, medieval, or pig-latin. Put some spice into those stuffy old prompts and help messages.

But seriously folks. The main reason we developed multilingual capability, the branding iron in our backside was: *getting graph-*

ics onto the user terminals. Jeff Reeder and Mark Hayton at TeleGrafix have done the hard part with the RIPscrip protocol (an advanced ASCII-based graphics protocol, specifically designed for online applications), the RIPterm terminal software, and the RIPaint design tool. We first saw RIPscrip at the ONE BBSCON last year and we were blown away by the possibilities.

The first thing we've done at Galacticom is to open up The Major BBS to talking to all kinds of users, on different kinds of terminal protocols — all simultaneously. See "Online Graphics and the RIPscrip Add-on" on page 31 to find out about the next step we took: designing the RIPscrip Add-on Option, and packaging it with RIPaint.

Once you have the RIPscrip Add-on Option, and once you can get the RIPterm graphical terminal software onto your users machines, they can start operating your BBS with a point and click of their desktop mouse.



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President's Corner

By Scott J. Brinker
President/CEO

Freedom is a wonderful thing. There's a sense of exhilaration when new doors are opened and new opportunities blossom before you. In the past five years of BBSing, the most "freeing" experience I've had was the discovery of the RIPscrip protocol.

Developed by Jeff Reeder and Mark Hayton, RIPscrip delivers on the promise of an EGA/VGA graphical interface for BBSes. It takes the freedom of ANSI drawing to a new order of magnitude. Imagine being able to draw wild pictures with curves and fills, offer mouse-driven icons and buttons for your prompts and menus, take advantage of multiple fonts, and more — well, it's here! And it's cool.

Customer support and business applications will be able to offer their users a friendly, Prodigy-like front-end. Entertainment systems will be able to provide graphical multi-player games. A whole new third-party market for online clip art and add-ons designed with graphics in mind from the word go will spring into existence.



And with other major terminal program vendors, such as Telix, now working on integrated RIPscrip support, it will only be a matter of time before the world converges on this next standard for the online industry. As a Galacticom Sysop, you can be on the leading edge.

As the new President of Galacticom, I believe that if we help you realize your dreams online, your success will reflect well on us. And more business for us means more engineering resources to create more products for you. It's the sort of win-win circle that makes you want to smile.

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