

The Major News

Volume V Issue 1

• For Operators of The Major BBS

• Spring 1994



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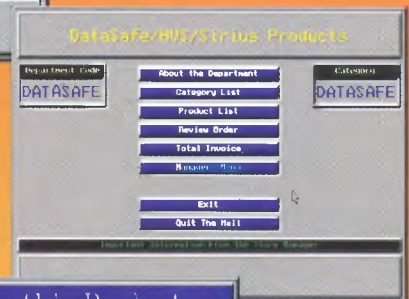
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Offline Import Utility

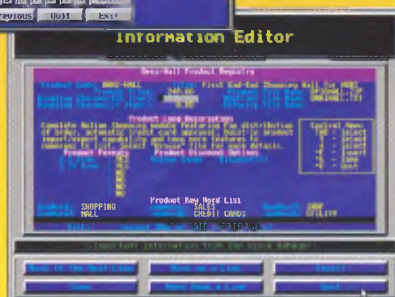
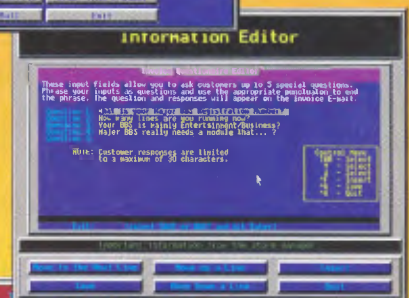
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President's Corner

By Scott J. Brinker
 President/CEO

Sixty pages! I exclaimed when Cindy Korman, our Editor-in-Chief for *The Major News*, showed me the layout for this issue. I couldn't believe it.

But with over 50 advertisements from third-parties and several dozen articles submitted, we were actually turning people away to get this out.

As a metaphor for the BBS industry, our once tiny customer newsletter has grown into a full-blown magazine, even rivaling store-bought industry magazines produced by real publishers.

Somewhere between "hacker havens" and information superhighways, you and I discovered a powerful tool. It's not even accurate to label it as bulletin board software. Our new box and brochure tout The Major BBS as: *An Open Platform for Creating Your Own Online Service*.

That's really what it is. Sure, the out-of-the-box software has some rather impressive features and kudos — even more with Version 6.2 — but that's just the beginning. You can do so much more than messaging and file transfers. Plug in photograph databases, credit card verifiers, a multimedia document retrieval subsystem, mail connectivity of all kinds, 900 number billing, shopping malls, Internet access, and so on. Or even use the Developer's Toolkit to write your own.

As you flip through this issue, I think you'll be as awed as I am with the cornucopia of third-party products available for your system. These guys are doing some incredible work! By supporting them with your business, you're paving the road for even better things to come.

I had a wonderful opportunity to work closely with many TPDs on this latest V6.2 release. Tim Stark and Don Pitchford, who have been key players in the third-party community, both joined our team this past fall. Tim engineered the new Polls and Questionnaires module, and Don was the lead architect behind the new File Libraries. And as you'll read in two of the stories inside, both High Velocity Software and Public Data Network helped make the new Entertainment Collection the state-of-the-art solution for consumer-oriented, for-profit networks.



Thanks to an early beta release, we also got some wonderful feedback from other key TPDs: Mountain Rose Multi Media, DataSafe Publications, Sirius Software, Tessier Technologies, Digital Consulting Services, Durand Communications, HighWaterMark, ProStar Computer Corporation, Logicom, BSI Technologies, and more. In fact, Mountain Rose has already taken advantage of the V6.2 platform for a new release of their widely successful Major CD add-on.

The success of these cooperative efforts has been so enthralling and productive for us, that I predict an even closer working relationship with the top TPDs on all future releases. It's a win-win-win situation for everyone.

Jumping to the Internet, things are really taking off there too. After a bumpy start, the Major Gateway/Internet is now humming away smoothly on several hundred systems, pumping Internet mail and newsgroups day and night. You can even hook up "telnet" and "ftp" access through a Unix box, or via third-party solutions offered by Sylvain Durocher of Vircom, Inc. and Brad Clements of Murk Works, Inc. A couple of feature stories in this issue will give you the information you need to make it happen.

There's so much more to tell you, but Cindy's already looking a little nervous about space. So if you haven't talked to us directly in a while, just give us a call. We'd love to hear how you're doing, bring you up to V6.2, and share with you the latest news from the third-party front. Or, drop us a line on the Internet (via Major Gateway/Internet). You can reach me personally at brinker@gcomm.com.

Enjoy this issue, and, as always, thanks for being our customer.

(P.S. We're still growing. If you know someone who wants the opportunity to make a mark in this BBS revolution/evolution, have them give me a call.)



Announcing Version 6.2 of The Major BBS

by Scott J. Brinker
President/CEO

At BBSCON '93, we brought paper, pencils, and both ears to find out how we could best improve The Major BBS for you. Along with some terrific feedback in the /Sysops Forum on our Demo System (networked by MailLink and NetACCESS), the wish list was created, and the Version 6.2 project was born.

Now, after six months of late-night development and testing, it's ready for you. Here's what you get...

The brand new File Libraries now have a full-screen interface that lets you browse through files and their short descriptions using the arrow keys. Hit <Enter> on a file to see its details and long description. <Ctrl-T> tags the file for download later, <Ctrl-V> views the contents of ZIP'd archives, and <Ctrl-D> jumps immediately into downloading it with the protocol of your choice.

New search methods for recent files and most popular files (by the number of times each has been downloaded) have also been added, along with a complete boolean keyword search engine. A few other extras such as user preferences (such as protocol selection) and automatic DIZ-file extraction are in there as well.

Behind the scenes as the Sysop, you can "join" Libraries together. This can be used to create multi-directory Library categories, that are ideal for CD-ROM offerings. A new

"copy before download" configuration option for each Library makes CD-ROM changers highly useful too.

In conjunction with V6.2, Bert Rozenberg of Mountain Rose Multi Media announced a new version of its Major CD add-on (distributed in the U.S. by Tessier Technologies and ProStar Computer Corp.). Major CD gives you the option of managing huge volumes of files on networked computers and CD-ROM drives.

Next on our list was Polls and Questionnaires. Completely redesigned and written from scratch, this new module lets you create an unlimited number of polls (for tallied votes) and questionnaires (for open-ended responses). Statistics are generated online in real-time, although an offline facility is still included for printed reports.

Each poll/questionnaire can have up to 100 questions. Each question can be configured to accept a certain answer type: yes/no, true/false, multiple choice, credit card number, date, numeric value, open response. The answers to multiple choice questions can be used to then "branch" to different follow-up questions.

Answers can be saved to a Btrieve database, an ASCII file, or both — or just discarded if you're using branching polls for more of an expert help system application. Btrieve answers can be associated with a user's account record for you, or your users if you allow, to look up later. You can even assign a priority to a poll/questionnaire that forces users to take it at log on time (or in

less urgent situations, just notified or asked if they want to take it).

Next: online graphics. Now you don't have to be a graphic artist to win ooh's and aah's from your users. With V6.2 we have included an out-of-the-box English/RIP language. It automatically detects RIPscript-compatible callers at connect time. You simply configure your menus under Menu Tree, and we take care of generating appropriate-looking RIPscript menus complete with mouse fields. (Of course the RIPscript Add-on Option, now titled the RIPaint Add-on Option, is still available as an integrated DLL to let you paint your own, unique RIPscript scenes and menus as well.)

One last visible addition was the integration of Major QWK-mail into the baseline package. With the popularity of QWK becoming so widespread for offline messaging, we decided to make it a basic feature. (And to be fair to everyone who purchased Major QWK-mail separately, we will update them to Version 6.2 for just \$19 plus shipping — a dramatic discount on the standard V6.2 upgrade prices.)

Under the hood, some rather exciting developments also took place. We added support for up to 16 channel groups, including new 57.6K bps channels. This lets you take full advantage of the new line of 28.8K modems now on the market.

But the big improvement came in file transfer efficiency — a 70% improvement over Version 6.12. On our in-house "megapup" test system, we clocked 100 channels locked at 19.2K, all simultaneously downloading files over real serial connections with a 1751 CPS rate on each channel, on a 60 MHz Pentium computer with no server or special hard drive caching. *No other PC-based software on the planet can even come close to this Mach 1 performance.*

We also boosted the performance of MHS message importing (beta test results showed as many as 1,800 messages an hour). This is particularly ideal for systems running Major Gateway/Internet connected to live feeds of newsgroups on a daily basis.

And, of course, minor enhancements and previous glitch fixes were cranked in as well, along with a new edition of the Sysop's manual. There's more good news in V6.2, but we'd rather let you see for yourself. Just call our sales staff at 1-800-328-1128 (305-583-5990 outside the U.S. and Canada) to have your update shipped immediately.

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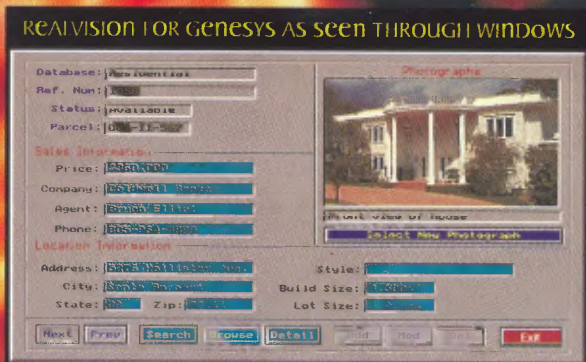
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