

jr Newsletter

April, 1988

PCjr User Groups Offer Friendship & Support

The Metro PCjr Users Group is a model of what a good users group should be. Serving the greater Washington, D.C. area, the group provides a remarkable variety of services for its 222 PCjr members.

Earlier this year, Metro members voted to spend hundreds of dollars from the club's treasury to set up a 24 hour Bulletin Board System devoted to PCjrs. The board has downloadable software, including jr specific utilities, messages, news and tips by and for PCjr users.

A dozen of the club's more knowledgeable members have volunteered to help other PCjr owners with specific problems or questions they may have. A list of these members' telephone numbers, along with the area of expertise that person has to offer, has been published in the group's informative monthly newsletter. These "Help Lines" offer assistance with hard disks, modems, 736K upgrades, Lotus 1-2-3, PC-Write, PASCAL and dozens of other subjects.

At monthly meetings, usually attended by 50-60 members, there are question and answer sessions along with hardware and/or software demonstrations. Members share tips and experiences they've had with new software or some

Look ! -- jr Newsletter Is Bigger Than Ever !

After nearly two years of publication, jr Newsletter has more subscribers than ever before. And, in response to reader requests, we have added eight more pages of PCjr information to this issue. Now there's more space for questions and answers, software reviews, hardware news, PCjr tips, and other information you need to get the most out of your fine computer. In order to provide these extra pages, we have used a lighter grade paper. But we feel the sacrifice is worth it -- and we hope you'll agree!

Another benefit this month--disk prices in our Software Store have dropped to \$5.95.

of the newer PCjr products that seem to be popping up regularly.

Eager Membership

"Our membership has actually grown in the past few months," says Carl Haub, the newly elected president. "We've got a lot of new blood and everyone's eager. Everything is expanding now." He said group members put up posters and leave the group's business cards in software stores, computer stores and other places of business. "We have to do that," he said, "Because people don't go out looking for PCjr groups. They just don't expect them to exist."

One of the group's latest projects is to compile a list of software that "doesn't run out of the box" and to write or call the software manufacturers complaining about the fact that their software won't run on PCjrs. "A lot of these manufacturers don't realize that their products won't run on PCjrs and as soon as you tell them, they want to do something about it," Haub said. Borland's new version of Turbo C is a good example.

Other PCjr Groups

There are several other active and supportive PCjr user

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PCjr Lives!

Notes On Compatibility

With all the information that has been flowing in regarding software compatibility and how to fix problems with software that supposedly won't run on PCjr's, it looks as though this column is going to be a regular feature in jr Newsletter. So, we hope you like it -- and profit by it. Please keep those letters and tips coming.

* * * * *

Just a quick note before we start with news from the PCjr compatibility front: When we added The PCjr Compatibility Disk (Disk #60) to the Software Store in February, we told you that the disk contained a listing of "nearly 300" software titles with information on whether or not they were compatible, how much memory they required, and tips on how to operate them on your PCjr. Since the time we wrote that article and the time we finished preparing the listing on Disk #60, we obtained information on over 200 more titles. So the disk contains PCjr tips on MORE THAN 500 software titles.

* * * * *

Here's some encouraging news about **Microsoft's QuickBASIC**. As you may know, we have a patch on the **JR PATCHES DISK (Disk #56)** which very nicely fixes the so called "incompatibility" with QuickBASIC 3.0. The problem was that keystrokes entered on a PCjr were registering twice and the shift key would get stuck.

Thanks to a clever PCjr owner (John Bongiovanni), this turned out to be a rather simple problem to solve. He wrote a patch that fixed a quirk in PCjr's ROM BIOS, and that was it! QB 3.0 worked nicely. As it turns out, QB 4.0, the latest version of this very popular software, also works with the patch. This patch should also make other so called "incompatible" software work on PCjr's, if the problem is the same.

We don't want to make this a long story, but Microsoft somehow heard that we were offering this patch to our readers and they wrote to ask if we would make the patch available to them. They said, "We would be interested in giving this information out to our customers who at present may be having trouble running our products on the IBM PCjr."

We pass this along to you because we feel it is encouraging to hear that Microsoft cares about PCjr owners. They didn't care enough to make sure the software they wrote would be compatible, but at least they care enough right now to provide the patch that will enable PCjr owners to use their product. They certainly ought to care. There are several hundred thousand of us who are quite happy with our much maligned computers and we are understandably offended when software publishers don't take the time to write software we can use.

Just one more note of cheer about QuickBASIC. Rene

Waldron, another clever PCjr user, sent us another patch for use with QuickBASIC 3.0 or 4.0. It takes care of an annoying beep that occurs whenever the up or down arrows are pressed. We added the patch to our Disk #56. For those of you who already purchased the disk, just send a copy to us and we'll copy Rene's program to your disk for you.

* * * * *

Yes, **Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer IS** compatible with PCjr's, thanks to Electronic Arts' policy of providing unprotected versions (the protected version won't run on PCjr's). Electronic Arts reports that it is now releasing many of its programs in unprotected versions. "Besides reducing everyone's aggravation level (we hate designing it, you hate dealing with it), it means that future programs will be more clone-compatible than ever," they said in one of their recent publications. However, PCjr owners who have 128K should note that Flight Trainer requires 256K. Furthermore, they say that, although 256K games will be standard for awhile, they expect to be producing more and more games and other software requiring 512K. Time to expand your jr's memory?

* * * * *

Gary English of San Diego, CA shared a letter with us that he wrote to Weekly Family Reader Software. In his letter he strongly objected to the fact that **Sticky Bear Math** and **Sticky Bear Reading** are both incompatible with PCjr's. He complimented the company on its excellent software, but wrote "I wish to bring to your attention that there are currently 500,000 PCjr owners across the country that rely on companies like yours to supply the quality software we need for our machines. The technology is here to make any program PCjr compatible, and it is a shame that your programmers have elected to ignore this large segment of the computing population. Many of us bought our PCjr's to run such valuable education programs as your Sticky Bear Series."

He goes on to say, "I know that a significant number of my fellow 500,000 PCjr owners would gladly purchase copies of your software if it would run on their machines. Please

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Compatibility Notes

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don't ignore us! We love our computers and are always looking for quality software that takes advantage of our machines' special features." If more PCjr owners (lovers?) write to software companies, they will realize that we are very fond of our computers and are not about to trade them in for clones. So we will continue to be a significant part of the software buying public for years to come.

* * * *

Tempted by some of the fine games by Sir-Tech? Del Mineard of Elkhart, Indiana, writes that all of the following titles run on his PCjr equipped with 640K (Tecmar jr Captain):

Deep Space: Operation Copernicus
Wizardry - Proving Grounds
Wizardry - Knights of Diamonds
Wizardry - Legacy of Llylgamyn
The Seven Spirits of RA
The Clan Practical Accountant

Sir Tech is our kind of software publisher!

Tecmar Jumps Back Into PCjr Business

Tecmar, the manufacturer of some of the most popular memory expansion units for PCjrs, has apparently been alerted to the fact that PCjr users continue to love their computers.

After lying low in terms of PCjr products for more than a year (they claim they never got out of the business, but their products were about as available as pink bananas) they have returned to the marketplace with a product that should be very attractive to PCjr users who still have only 128K.

Tecmar's new version of the jr Captain provides 512K, a parallel printer port and power supply, along with some software, for \$225. The older jr Captain sold for about \$300 and only provided 128K of additional memory. You then had to purchase a jr Cadet for another \$125 or so to bring your jr Captain up to 512K, and your entire PCjr system up to 640K. So this is quite a deal.

The person we talked with at Tecmar said there is a two year warranty on parts and labor and they'll replace any defective units in 48 hours if returned within 6 months of purchase.

For more information, call 1-800-624-8560 and ask for Liz or Judy, who are the PCjr specialists.

Computer Joker Disk Makes PCjr Play Tricks

Want to get a laugh every time you boot up your computer? Or cause your friends to think their computer is going through a wash, spin and dry cycle?

Computer Joker, a new disk (Disk #64) in the Jr Newsletter Software Store, will do all this for you.

The disk contains several quite different humorous programs. The most spellbinding one is called Drain. When it is run, it displays an error message and then provides screen statements and sound effects that simulate your computer going through wash, spin and dry cycles of a washing machine. If you sneak this into a friend's autoexec.bat file, he or she will get quite a laugh -- after recovering from the initial fright and confusion caused by the error message and apparent draining of his or her computer system.

Another program, called Backtalk, seems to freeze your computer, providing wisecracks every time to press a key. Any key, it doesn't matter. Backtalk will keep talking back to you in a not so polite manner (not x-rated, though). This is another program that gives you a great opportunity for playing practical jokes on your family and friends.

Then there's Fortune, which will display fortune cookie-type predictions. Hundreds are provided for your enjoyment. Or, if you'd rather see wisdom mixed with pessimism, you'll like Murf. This is a collection of "Murphy's Laws" -- hundreds of them -- which can be invoked from batch files.

Instructions for using these files either as practical jokes or for your own amusement are included on the disk.

But wait, we forgot to mention April, the April Fool's program that turns your screen upside down. Or Fake 1-2-3, which will display a fake spreadsheet screen. Handy when the boss walks in and surprises you while playing a game.

Computer Joker is Disk #64 in the Jr Newsletter Software Store, page 11.

Setting Keyboard Click

Albert Allen of OWL Software offers the following short BASIC program to set both the Caps Lock and the Keyboard Click. It should be used early in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file:

```
5 DEF SEG=0
10 POKE 1047, 64' set caplock
20 POKE 1048, 4' set keyclick
30 SYSTEM' return to DOS
```

Do you have any tips or interesting PCjr experiences you'd like to share with fellow jr owners? If so, please send them to jrNewsletter, Box 163, Southbury, CT 06488.

Games for Early Learners

By Dorothy A. DeBisschop

Our latest disk, Games for Early Learners, includes several outstanding educational programs. They stimulate learning with action, color, and sound. These stimuli, received in response to correct answers, motivate the child's learning.

Teach Tot teaches shapes, letters, and numbers. It is colorful, cheerful, and fun. Even adults will smile when the round faces of "Ten Little Indians" all burst forth with smiles. The program is excellent for ages four through six.

Animals is an excellent companion to Teach Tot. It is an early counting and math program. It comes with bright, colorful animals to count, add, and subtract. The old favorite song, "I Went to the Animal Fair" adds to the festive atmosphere of the game. The program's best feature is the incentive it gives for right answers, without any discouragement for a wrong answer. If the answer is wrong, PCjr just says "Try again." After the player makes seven correct answers, (whether in 7 or 27 tries) reward arrives. A song and picture of an animal compliment the learner. Compliments include such confidence boosters as Super, Good Job, Awesome, Wow, and Fantastic!

The Alphabet game features four basic exercises:

1. upper case letter matching
2. lower case letter matching
3. upper case sequences

4. lower case sequences

A companion program to Animals, it is almost as good. When the player gives six correct answers (regardless of how many tries it takes), there's a reward. Songs played for the cheering segment include such favorites as "Where has my Little Dog Gone?" and "Hickory Dickory Dock."

The face of the man on screen becomes animated during the cheer. He seems to be saying "hooray!"

One small point with this program might bother an unusually sensitive youngsters. When a wrong answer is given, the face moves, and it almost looks like he's sticking his tongue out at the player. Some kids won't notice this and most will take it in their stride. But for the sensitive few, don't introduce this game until the learner has gained enough self confidence with the other games to enjoy this one, too.

Also included on the disk is Tell Time. The program shows the face of the clock and lists a choice of three different written descriptions of the time. Choose the correct description and the face smiles at you. It's an enjoyable drill for learning to tell time. If your child can't read the descriptive text on the screen, they'll still enjoy game with an adult. The shared activity is as good for the child's attitude towards learning, as sitting on a parent's lap while being read a story.

The final game, Spell, is for the student who has begun reading. A word is shown on the screen. When screen blanks, the player spells the word. The program has attractive graphics and compliments the player with a variety of comments after correct answers. It's very upbeat and motivating for early elementary grade students.

It would also be useful for children with dyslexia, a reading disorder where letters may be perceived in reverse order. This game will train them to read from left to right. It also gives practice in eye and hand coordination.

For children in mainstream programs, students in grades 1 through 3 will enjoy it.

These programs are so good, if you've got a young child, you'll appreciate this disk. Even if you haven't got a young child, you may find it useful to keep visiting children happily amused while you chat with their parents.

The programs will operate on one drive with 128K. Games for Early Learners is Disk #63 in the jr Newsletter Software Store, page 11.

EXPAND YOUR PCJR

| | |
|--|-------|
| jr. Hotshot 256K Memory | \$159 |
| Racore Drive II Plus w/DMA & 512K Memory | \$450 |
| AT Keyboard w/Adaptor Cable | \$109 |
| Quick Silver Cartridge | \$ 30 |
| Jr Datadesk Keyboard w/Superkey | \$130 |
| 20 Meg External Hard Drive System | \$579 |
| 1200 Baud External Modem | \$ 99 |
| JR-RS232 Modem Cable | \$ 19 |
| 3.5" External Disk Drive | \$299 |
| Nickel Express Jr 8MHz Board | \$ 79 |
| Dual Font Chip | \$ 19 |

For a complete list with monthly specials send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

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Creating Large Files With Writing Assistant 1.0

The limitation on the size of the files you can create with Writing Assistant 1.0 on your PCjr can be increased by using a PC ID cartridge according to reports from PCjr users.

Apparently the PC ID cartridge fools Writing Assistant into allowing the creation of substantially larger files by making it think you are using a PC instead of a PCjr. The cartridge costs about \$18 and is available from most of the advertisers in jr Newsletter.



Questions and Answers



EDITOR'S NOTE jr Newsletter gets questions in the mail from PCjr owners every day. So many, in fact, that we apologize for not being able to answer them personally. This Questions and Answers column is our way of responding to the questions readers ask about their PCjrs. We can't answer all of the questions we receive, but we try to answer those that are either asked by several readers or those we feel will be of interest to PCjr owners in general. If you have a question that you do not see answered here, or elsewhere in this newsletter, please feel free to write to us at jr Newsletter, Box 163, Southbury, CT 06488

Q. I've heard so much about jrconfig.sys being wonderful for PCjrs, but I don't know what it is or what it can do for me? How would I use it?

A. When you expand the memory of your PCjr, you need to have a file on your DOS diskette called config.sys. This file will set up your PCjr every time you boot up. Without such a file, DOS will not recognize your additional memory. So all the PCjr memory expansion units come with software and instructions for making a config.sys file. The beauty of jrconfig.sys is that it will work with all the PCjr memory expansion units (IBM, Tecmar, Microsoft, Legacy, Racore, etc.) and it will automatically create a ram disk (or several) for you, set your keyboard click, change the number of video buffers, and recognize memory above 640k (which no other config.sys software will do). All this will be done automatically when you first boot up your PCjr. That's why we include jrconfig.sys on JR POWER PACK (Disk #52).

A config.sys file is just a text file which you can type simply by typing at the A> prompt:

```
COPY CON CONFIG.SYS
```

You then press Enter and the cursor will return to the left margin. Then just type in the lines you want to be in your config.sys file. Here's an example of what you might type if you want to use jrconfig.sys:

```
DEVICE=JRCONFIG.SYS -D2 -C -T3 -S100
```

This tells DOS that you have two disk drives, sets the keyboard click on, sets your video display to 80 column color, and creates a 100K ram drive as drive C:. When you've finished typing the line for your config.sys file, press F6 (or Fn6), then Enter. If at any time you want to change the config.sys file, you can.

Q. I have noticed that the clock on my PCjr gains time. Do I have a defective clock? If so, what can I do about it?

A. The PCjr clock has the peculiar habit of gaining time each time a disk access is performed. Thus, the more you use your PCjr, the faster the clock will run. Not a good way to keep accurate track of the time, is it? The only solution we know of is to purchase a Clock Calendar Cartridge from Integrity Technology. This clock is an accurate one, powered by a 3 volt lithium battery, which comes with the cartridge. Integrity has programmed the cartridge so that it will provide information to DOS for accurate time and date listings in your diskette directories. The cartridge sells for \$27.50 from Integrity Technology, 105 Serra Way, Suite 230, Milpitas, CA 95035 (408) 262-8640.

Q. Is there an easy way to combine two or more files into one?

A. Yes, although many word processors have commands that will achieve this, DOS can also do it quite easily. All you have to do is use the copy command. The same one you use to copy files to another disk, but this one will do it for you on the same disk. Let's say you have a file called file1.new and another one called file2.old. If you type at the DOS prompt:

```
copy file1.new + file2.old
```

you will then have both files combined in the file called file1.new. You will not have wiped out file2.old by doing this. With this command you can combine several files together. Just type them in as shown above with a space, plus sign, space between them. The first file in the sequence will end up containing all the files you wanted combined.

Q. I keep seeing software that says you need a CGA. Can I get one for my PCjr?

A. Your PCjr has a Color Graphics Adapter (CGA) built in. You don't have to go out and buy one, as the people with plain old PCs, XTs, and clones have to do. The color capabilities that came with your PCjr allow display of the same 16 colors that other CGA equipped computers will display. Although new display standards, such as EGA (Enhanced Graphics Adapter), MCGA (Multi-Color Graphics Array) and VGA (Video Graphics Array) have come along,

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Questions and Answers

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there are so many computers out there (millions of them) with CGAs just like your PCjr's, that software manufacturers are not likely to drop CGA compatibility for many years.

Q. When I buy shareware, such as PC-Write from you, am I obligated to send in the requested payment to the software authors?

A. You have a moral obligation to pay the shareware fee if you decide you like the software and plan to use it. Shareware is offered on the "try it first, then buy it if you like it" principle. This is good for those of us who hate to buy things without knowing what we are getting. And it provides an inexpensive way for software authors to make their products available to computer users everywhere.

If you have any tips on getting the most out of your PCjr, please share them with readers of this newsletter by sending them to jrNewsletter, Box 163, Southbury, CT 06488.

Nickel Express Boards Have Problems On Some PCjrs

The **Nickel Express** PCjr Turbo Board, which is capable of boosting the speed of PCjrs up to 8MHz, does not work as well with Tecmar and Impulse memory expansion units as it does with others.

The board, which is sold by Paul Rau Consulting, is installed in place of the PCjr's clock chip. Once installed, it is theoretically capable of making your PCjr run at three selectable speeds -- 6.77MHz, 7.37MHz and 8MHz.

However, only PCjrs whose memories have been expanded with IBM sidecars can operate at the fastest speed. Racore and jr Hotshot expanded PCjrs can operate at the 7.37MHz speed, which is nearly three times as fast as a PC, so that may not be considered a lethal drawback.

According to a company spokesperson, the turbo board won't work with the Microsoft jr Booster or a Racore 20 meg hard drive. It does work with most other hard drives, but you are advised to check with the company before buying a turbo board if you have a hard drive on your PCjr.

An earlier problem making the board work well with jr Hotshots has been fixed by shortening the cable. Impulse boards work better when other than Impulse software is used. And there is a way to modify your Tecmar board so the Nickel Express will work. For more information on any of these options, contact Paul Rau Consulting, 260 N. Lincoln Way N, Galt, CA 95632 (209) 745-9284.

Increasing Disk Buffers Often Speeds Up Software

If you have more than 256K on your PCjr you may want to experiment with an increased number of disk buffers to gain speed for certain software.

What are disk buffers? You may not be aware of it, but every time you boot up, DOS reserves a certain portion of RAM for disk buffers. Usually about 528 bytes, a disk buffer is a part of your computer's memory where DOS can temporarily store information that it is asked to read or write to disk. It generally does this when the information it is asked to read or write is not the same size as a disk sector. When the buffer gets full, DOS will write the information on disk.

The upshot of this is that if you are using software that reads and writes to disk very often, you will be able to operate that software faster if you tell DOS to reserve more than the usual two disk buffers. Generally, database and spreadsheet software benefit from a higher number of buffers. But it depends upon how the software is written. So the best thing to do is experiment with the software you use most often.

The way to set the number of disk buffers available for DOS is to put the line `BUFFERS=nn` in your `config.sys` file. (`nn` stands for whatever number you select.) Although theoretically the greater number of buffers the better, when using DOS 2.1, you will find that the optimum number is usually somewhere between 10 and 20. DOS 2.1 tends to become bogged down with more than 20 buffers. DOS 3.0 and higher, on the other hand, can handle up to 50 or 60 buffers without getting bogged down.

For those of you who are not familiar with modifying your `config.sys` file, you can do it with any word processor. Just add the line `BUFFERS=10` (or whatever number you want to try.) Or you can write a `config.sys` file from scratch, either with a word processor, or by typing at the DOS prompt: `COPY CON CONFIG.SYS`.

Then type the lines you want. When you are done, press F6 or Control Z, then Enter. If you use the copy con method, you will be starting from scratch, which means before doing this you should have a record of what your existing `config.sys` file says. You should preserve the other parts of it while adding the buffers line (as a separate line.)

Replacement Drive Tip

Here's a tip from the Eugene Oregon PCjr Users Group Newsletter: When it comes time for you to replace your original PCjr disk drive, be sure to select one that has a 6 MS stopper motor and not a 12MS motor.

The original disk drive in your PCjr is a Qume drive. These can be obtained, complete with the IBM logo you're used to seeing.

Another thing to be sure of is that the dimensions of the replacement drive -- especially the height -- are going to fit in your PCjr. There are many, many disk drives out there and some are slightly off in terms of fitting in your PCjr.

Quattro Has Many Features But Hogs Memory, Eats Drives

A review of the highly touted spreadsheet program Quattro in the Metro PCjr Journal warns PCjr users that, although the software has many excellent features, it uses a great deal of RAM and requires extensive use of floppy disks.

Carl Haub, author of the review, reports that after a lengthy installation procedure, he found Quattro to be superior to Lotus 1-2-3, but a glutton for memory. For example, with his PCjr, which is equipped with 736K of RAM, there was only 263K left for a spreadsheet after bootup. On the same system, Lotus 1A leaves 507K.

Haub also reported that Quattro does not make use of all 16 colors available on PCjrs.

New Cartridge Boots Fast And Improves Compatibility

With a **Quicksilver Cartridge** installed in one of your PCjr cartridge slots, you'll be able to turn your computer on without waiting for it to go through its hardware and memory checks. And you won't have to hear that beep that some people find annoying every time your PCjr gets ready to go, either.

The Quicksilver Cartridge also alters some of the PCjr keyboard routines, which solves some software compatibility difficulties. **QuickBASIC** is one example of software which normally doesn't operate on PCjrs, but will run with the cartridge installed. (It will also run with one of the patches provided on JR PATCHES (Disk #56).

No special software is needed to operate the functions provided by the cartridge. Just plug it in and it's ready to go, whenever you turn your PCjr on.

The cartridge is available for ABOUT \$30.00. Check advertisements in this issue.

SPC DISKITjr HARD DRIVE

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| DISKITjr 22L (65ms, 35ms option) | \$695 |
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Features: Works with all other add-ons, including Tecmar, Racore,, jrHotshot, etc.

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If You REALLY Want To Know What's Wrong With Your jr...

Our PCjrs have a very nice, very colorful self test procedure than can be started by pressing and holding Ctrl and Alt, then pressing Ins. Very colorful and interesting, perhaps the first time you try it -- but not truly informative.

The test menu screens that come up during the test give you a chance to test just about everything -- disk drive, monitor, light pen, joystick, sound, keyboard, modem and printer. And it is useful to some extent. It can help you figure out where your problem is. But that's about all.

As your PCjr Guide to Operations will tell you, if your jr fails any one of the tests, "Have your IBM PCjr serviced."

That's not a lot of help, but it's about all the bad news most people need to have. Because even if the self test gave you more technical information, you probably wouldn't know what to do with it.

For the Technician

However, if you are inclined to be good about technical matters, you might want to consider purchasing the Hardware Maintenance and Service Manual. It comes with four service plugs that go in the joystick ports, the serial port and the parallel port.

These plugs add a new dimension to the diagnostic tests. When the plugs are in and the test is run, you will not only get an indication of where the problem is located, but you will see on your monitor a four digit figure that corresponds to a list in the manual.

When you look up the code, the manual provides a detailed description of what is wrong and how to go about fixing it. Sometimes the problem will be something that any reasonably ambitious do-it-yourselfer can handle. Other times you will have to cart your jr to the service center. But at least you will be able to tell the technician what is wrong and you will know if a technician tries to expand the repair bill beyond the real problem.

The Hardware Maintenance and Service Manual can be obtained from IBM dealers. It can also be obtained from Computer Reset, P.O. Box 461782, Garland, TX 75046 for \$55, which is about \$20 below the retail price. Or, we have heard that Sears stores still have some for an even lower price.

Have You Purchased New Software for Your PCjr Recently?

We would like to hear from readers who have purchased new software titles. If the software runs well on your PCjr, we'd like to inform the rest of our readers. Similarly, if software proved to be incompatible, we would like to publish that information as well. Please share your experiences with other PCjr users by writing to us at jr Newsletter, Box 163, Southbury, CT 06488.



READER FEEDBACK



Memory Expansion Problem

I own a PCjr, have had for 3 years now, and am very pleased with it. I expanded it last year with 3 IBM expansion sidecars and a parallel printer port when they had their last great sale of PCjr equipment. I called the PCjr Hotline on how to use the expansion boards. This gave me a 512K machine with a parallel printer port and it has worked fine for me.

I recently have had a problem when I boot up initially. I only get an indication that I have 384K of memory.

I have gone through the diagnostics steps in the Guide to Operations Manual, and I go through every step until I get to a point where it says, "take your Junior to a service center." Well, there aren't any around here. I was wondering how many user have these expansion units, how they have stacked theirs up, and if they've had similar problems, and what they've done to fix them.

I'd appreciate any help I can get.

Steve Balek, Washington, IL

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since you have several side cars

mounted on your PCjr and you are getting some memory, chances are that your problems are caused by a poor connection. This could be a result of some dirt or dust build-up, or simply insufficient contact. We suggest removing the sidecars, cleaning the connectors with a cloth and reinstalling. If you have any more problems, you can send your system to Solid Rock, Computer Reset, or PC Enterprises, all of whom repair PCjr. But our bet is that the cleaning job will do the trick.

New Keyboard Delights User, As Does Poor Man's Mouse

Just a note to let you know that I still am enjoying your fine Newsletter and to inform you of a couple of things. Another Keyboard that you can add to your list of compatibles is the **Northgate C/T 101** (extended keyboard with 101 keys). I got it for Christmas along with a keyboard adapter cable and it has worked flawlessly ever since. It has a great touch. I am able to use PMM (poor man's mouse) on the JR POWER PAK disk with a program called **Easycad**, and it takes the place of a mouse in every way. I talked to Paul Rau Consulting regarding their Nickel Express Turbo Board and am disappointed to find out that it does not work well with the Tecmar Jr Captain, which many of us have. Other turbo boards are in the works, however.

A question for you regarding Easycad and other Cad programs I have tried. Regardless of what video driver I try to load, all I can get for screen size of 40x25 even though the driver states 320x200. Is this because of the difference in the pc bios? I have looked at the Jr video article on the Powerpac diskette, but have not come up with anything. Does anybody out there have a solution? Also in the April 1987 edition Brit Hume talks about programs using direct screen writes and how there is a patch for this problem for

(Continues on page 12)

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jr Newsletter Software Store

**Disk prices drop!
Now just \$5.95**

This software is the best public domain and user-supported software for the PCjr we've been able to find. All the programs in this collection have been tested on our PCjrs and are highly recommended. Some of these programs are equal to or better than commercial programs costing hundreds of dollars. The programs in this collection are available for \$5.95 per disk.

THE BEST OF JR NEWSLETTER. The best and most informative articles from twelve issues of jr Newsletter (June 1986 through May 1987 issues) are contained on this disk. More than 50 articles on compatability, problem solving, software, maintenance, memory expansion, how-to projects, tips on using DOS, and more! 128K (Disk #54)

PC-WRITE. This extremely popular word processing program is both powerful and easy to use. A review in PC World said "PC-Write may well be more versatile than WordStar; it's certainly more straightforward." Version 2.5 runs well on 128K. Version 2.7 has more features, comes on two diskettes and requires 256K to run without the spelling checker, which requires 384K. (Order Disk #1 for 128K V2.5. Order Disks #2A and 2B for V2.7)

PC-FILE III. This excellent database manager will handle up to 9,999 records, such as names and addresses, notes, product descriptions, etc. Uses generic, embedded, soundex and wildcard searches. Global updates and deletes. Sorts on any field. Too many features to mention. (Disk #3 runs on 128K, Disk #4 needs 256K)

PC-CALC. A versatile spreadsheet program that can do up to 26 columns of adjustable size and 256 lines. Features on-screen prompts, many math and statistical functions, hidden column capability, many formatting options, 64 character cells, automatic global recalculation, and more. Has some limits on 128K, but still very useful. (Disk #5 runs on 128K, Disk #6 requires 320K and two drives)

CHECK PROCESSOR - Easy to use software for financial record keeping. Balance checkbook, print expenses by category, etc. 128K (Disk #59)

PROCOMM. This powerful, yet easy to use telecommunications program has become the one favored by more PCjr users than any other. Dialing directory, auto redial, XMODEM, Kermit and other file transfer protocols, auto logon, DOS gateway, keyboard macros, exploding windows and many other features. The editor of PC Magazine called Procomm "competitive with the best comm programs on the market." Manual on disk. 256K (Disk #15)

PC-TOUCH. Designed to teach and practice touch typing. As you type, an on-screen line shows the number of erroneous keystrokes, and your accuracy rating as a percentage of keystrokes. 128K. (Disk #18)

3 X 5. An information management program that works just like a 3 x 5 card file. It offers speed, versatility and simplicity in entering, indexing and retrieving data. Has an integrated word processor, powerful search commands, multiple windows so you can edit in one and search in another, etc. Requires 256K. (Disk #19)

PC-DESKTEAM. Enables you to have an alarm clock, calendar, typewriter, calculator, and phone book accessible from your keyboard. Can be a resident program while you are using other software if you have the memory. 128K will run it alone. Need more to run it with other software. (Disk #22)

PC-PROMPT. A memory resident program that provides the format for DOS commands in an on-line mode. Help screen toggles on and off Also help screens for BASICA, Turbo Pascal, Debug and EDLIN. 128K. (Disk #23)

PC DOS HELP. Similar to PC-Prompt, but takes up less memory (16K) as a resident program. Geared to DOS 2.1 with special PCjr commands included. 128K. (Disk #24)

PC-CHECK MANAGER. A menu-driven program that can handle multiple checkbooks, unlimited payees and ledger account assignments. Requires 256K. (Disk #25)

FAMILY HISTORY. Includes complete manual on disk with how-to info on tracing and setting up your family tree with detailed genealogical information. Easy to use and modify as you gather more data. New compiled version runs faster than previous version. 128K order Disk #33 alone. 256K order #33 and #33A.

(Continues on Page 10)

NEW KEY. Powerful popular program that allows you to redefine keystrokes and assign series of keystrokes to one or two keys. Customize software to meet your needs. Many other useful features included. 128K. (Disk #35)

PIANOMAN. A great music program! Allows you to write your own music, store it and play it on jr's terrific sound system. 128K. (Disk #36)

JR MUSIC MACHINE. If you want to write and play music on your PCjr, this program allows you to do it. Displays music as you write it using jr's 16 colors, and plays music back in three voice harmony. Features allow you to adjust key, tempo, note values, etc. Color Display required. 128K ok. (Disk #62)

PC-KEY DRAW. A powerful graphics program that allows you to draw, paint, produce slide shows, store and print your work. 256K, two drives. (Disk #37)

PC-KEY DRAW DEMO. Contains a slide show demonstration which allows you to see the amazing results you can get with PC-KEY DRAW. Helps to learn the many graphic capabilities of PC-KEY DRAW. (Disk #38)

PRINT HANDLER. Excellent software for printing banners, sideways, etc. Contains custom font generator, print spooler, and other useful print control utilities for Epson and compatible printers. 128K. (Disk #51)

IMAGEPRINT. Produces letter quality print on dot matrix printers. IBM Graphics Printers, Proprinters, Epsoms and compatibles. Contains many format features, three quality levels, interfaces with word processors. 128K ok. (Disk #50)

JR POWER PACK. A collection of particularly useful programs for PCjr owners. Set up RAM disks, address memory to 736K, turn a joystick into a mouse, set screen colors, keyboard click, scan and search text files, screenblinker, print spooler, and more. 128K. (Disk # 52)

PCjr COMPATIBILITY DISK. lists over 500 software titles, along with info on how they run (or don't run) on PCjrs. Also tips on how to make software PCjr compatible. 128K. (Disk #60)

BOYAN. Selected Best of the Year by PC Magazine, this outstanding telecommunications program will astound you with its smooth functioning and innovative features. Supports all protocols. Need 384K. (Disk #61)

DOS 2.1 FIX. Patches to fix the bugs in DOS 2.1. Cures most problems encountered when running memory intensive programs. Also patches to run BASIC and BASICA on DOS 2.1 without having Cartridge BASIC installed. 128K ok. (Disk #40)

DOSAMATIC. A nifty way to view the contents of disks, easily manipulate files and carry out DOS commands. Features a Mac-like "point and press interface which allows you to select the commands you want from pull down menus. Also permits loading several programs at once and jumping from one to the other. 128K ok, but more memory needed for "multi-tasking." (Disk #49)

PCJR PATCHES. Many patches to fix software that ordinarily won't run on PCjrs. Includes patches for Starflight, Advanced Flight Simulator, Quick Basic, Turbo Basic, Double DOS, and Bard's Tale (16 colors). (Disk #56)

HOME BUDGET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. Easy-to-use system for keeping track of income and expenses. Create separate accounts for income tax categories and get a summary at end of year. Provides chart of accounts, transaction reports, sorted ledger entries, etc. 128K. (Disk #57)

HOME INVENTORY. Taking an inventory of your home might even be fun with this easy-to-use software that takes you through the process step by step. Gives a complete record for insurance purposes. Also good for listing collections. 128K. (Disk #58)

GAMES

GAMES. An assortment of games for hours of fun and excitement. Includes Spacewar, Airtrax, life, Wumpus, Wizard and more. All good with 128K. (Disk #8)

PINBALL RALLY. A colorful collection of amazingly realistic pinball games. Using the Shift keys as flippers, the games get more and more complex until you get to Twilight Zone, which is the hardest because some parts are invisible. Runs on 128K. (Disk #10)

ARCADE GAMES. Includes Kong, Pango, PC-Golf, Pyramid and other exciting, colorful games for hours of fun. 128K. (Disk #30)

GAMES, GAMES, GAMES. A wild assortment of games to test your wits and skills. Includes Slither, Xwing, Torpedo, ABM2 and Overreact, where you are in charge of a nuclear plant. 128K. (Disk #34)

PC-CHESS. A full color many-featured chess program, with four levels of play. You can play against the computer or another human, save games to disk, set up the board yourself and switch sides if you want. It has two clocks for elapsed time for each player, allows castling, en passant and pawn promotion with validity checking, plus other features. 128K. (Disk #44)

ZAXXON/GALAXY TREK. Two exciting high tech shoot-em-up games. In Zaxxon you fly through an obstacle course,

shooting while you go, up and over walls, and eventually through space. Galaxy Trek makes you the commander of a Star Ship which you maneuver through the universe seeking to destroy a fleet of Megaton warships before they conquer the planets. 128K. (Disk #45)

PHRASE CRAZE. Based on the TV show Wheel of Fortune, you get to be the guest who guesses the mystery phrases and wins piles of money! The wheel spins to select the amount of money you win for correct guesses. It gets harder with each round you play. You can add your own phrases to this game or try to guess the ones provided on the disk. Lot of fun for adults as well as older kids. 128K. (Disk #46)

GOLF/SAILING. Two great games for sailors and golfers! The golf game has three courses, user definable club ranges and a swing control that determines whether you hit a slice, hook or straight shot. Three nine hole courses (Novice, Pro, and Sadistic). In the other game, you try to sail the three legs of the Bermuda Triangle avoiding, if you can, the creeping mists, alien crystals, vortexes and storms. Your boat is equipped with radar, rudder and sail (all of which you control) and an engine for emergencies. 128K ok for sailing. Need 256K for golf. (Disk #47)

BOARD GAMES. Eleven different games on one disk! Hours of fun with Monopoly, Yahtzee, Cribbage, Backgammon, Othello, and others. All run great on your PCjr! 128K. (Disk #31)

CASTAWAY/S. AMERICAN TREK. Test your survival skills as the survivor of a shipwreck in the South Pacific. Or as an explorer of South America. Two novice text adventures from Jim Button. Ages 12 and up. 128K. (Disk #53)

SUPER BOARD GAMES. Excellent versions of two popular board games Monopoly and Risk. Very much like the board versions, except your computer keeps track of everything for you. All you have to do is make the right moves and have fun. 256K. (Disk #55)

COMPUTER JOKER. Disk full of jokes, wisdom, and visual tricks to play on your computing friends. 128K ok (Disk # 64)

EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE

ORIGAMI. Learn the art of Japanese paper folding. This program shows you how, step-by-step, to create amazing animals and other objects just by folding paper. Fun for kids and adults, too. 128K. (Disk #39)

PLAY AND LEARN. Educational games for kids 5-12. Word match games, find-a-word puzzles, word scrambles, and many more made by teachers. 128K, need Cartridge Basic. (Disk #32)

WORD PROCESSING FOR KIDS. Simple, fun and easy-to-use word processor designed especially for beginning writers. Allows children to express their ideas easily and then print them out in large type on your printer. Colorful opening menus make learning the simple commands very easy. Parents/teachers manual is on the disk. 128K. (Disk#41)

MATH FUN! A great way to get kids learning how to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Includes a program called Math Tutor which has cleverly designed exercises for kids in Grades 1-6. Also Funnels and Buckets, a nifty math game that makes learning math fun. 128K. (Disk #42)

EARLY LEARNING. A collection of colorful educational games for ages 6-8. Sing-along alphabet, letter match, counting game, maze, pattern matching and more. 128K, need Cartridge Basic. (Disk #48)

GAMES FOR EARLY LEARNERS Young children like Teach Tot's alphabet and counting games. Other activities teach spelling and telling time. For Preschool through grade 3. 128K. (Disk #48)

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Reader Feedback

Continued from page 8.

Autocad. Would anybody know where to obtain one?
Thanks for your time. Keep up the good work.

Wesley Newbert, E. Longmeadow, MA

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have heard from PCjr owners who are using Autocad. **Generic Cad** is also PCjr compatible. The screen size problem Wesley mentions is new to us. Anyone have a solution?

Happy PCjr Owner Has 3.5" Drive and 20 MB Hard Drive Working Fine

I am writing in response to your request for "tips for getting the most out of your PCjr" in the January, 1988 issue.

I had an IBM PCjr with a Racore Drive Two, DMA, 640K and a Datadesk "AT" style keyboard.

I recently decided to upgrade my junior with the **Racore 20 MB hard drive**. I also decided to replace my Racore 5.25" drive with a **Toshiba 3.5" drive** that I saw advertised by Priority One Electronics (1-800-423-5922) for \$159.

I called technical support at Racore to see if their Drive Two could be replaced with a 3.5" drive when it is used in conjunction with their hard drive. The technician said that they had tried it with DOS 2.1 and it didn't work because the 3.5" disk could only be formatted to 360K. I asked if they had tried DOS 3.X and they said no. I then called Toshiba technical support and asked their opinion. They said that they could see no reason why it wouldn't work as long as the Toshiba 3.5" drive was either model no. 4210G0K or 4206A0K and the serial number was ND352. The Toshiba drive sold by Priority One was model 4210G0K and ND352 so I decided to buy it and give it a try.

The only problem I had installing the 3.5" drive was that the 34 wire ribbon signal cable to the Racore 5.25 drive was too short to attach to the 3.5" drive, so I had to buy a longer one. Otherwise, it was easy.

I then installed my 20 MB hard drive on top. I formatted the new hard drive using IBM DOS 3.30 using FDISK and then the command "SELECT C: 001 US". I also put "DEVICE=DRIVER.SYS /D:1" in the CONFIG.SYS file when I boot the hard drive. This is the DOS 3.30 driver for the 3.5" drive which installs it as drive D: and allows it to be formatted to 720K. I found out that my 3.5" drive is also accessible as the b: drive, but there it behaves as a 360K drive and is not truly a valid drive.

I was able to format the D: 3.5" drive for 720K and my hard drive works fine in combination with it as the C: drive.

I now have a 5.25" drive, a 3.5" drive, and a 20MB hard drive on my junior and I am very pleased with the system. I do not miss having two 5.25" drives because DISKCOPY and COPYIIJR works fine with one drive and 640K and I now

have compatibility with IBM's new 3.5" standard as well as twice the floppy disk storage on my D: drive.

I run **Wordstar 2000 Plus** version 3. **Lotus 123** vers 2.01, **Dbase III+**, **PFS First Publisher**, and **PC Paint Plus** on my system.

In the future I would like to find a way to add more features to my junior system such as more memory and 386 compatibility. There are lots of creative people out there!

I enjoy subscribing to jr Newsletter very much and find it very informative. I hope that other subscribers will continue to write about how they are improving or expanding their PCjr systems. Thank you.

Joe Pavlovich, Flint, MI

Rightwriter Checks Your Grammar

I use a grammar checker on top of my word processor. The one I use is **Rightwriter** by RightSoft. You need 256K and one disk drive, but it operates better with more memory and a ram drive. To operate with 256K and one drive, copy the file to the system disk to avoid constant disk swapping. This limits the length of the files. With more memory and Rightwriter copied to a ram drive it is comparable to running a spell check. Rightwriter is fully compatible with **Wordstar**, **Peachtext 5000**, **Volkswriter**, **PC Write**, **Perfect Writer**, **Lex**, **PFS Write**, **Writing Assistant**, **Spellbinder**, **Edix**, **EDLIN**, **Eaglewriter**, **Microsoft Word**, **Multimate**, and all other ASCII editors.

To use with **DiaplayWrite III**, **Easywriter II**, **Wordstar 2000+**, **WordPerfect**, **Wordvisor**, and **XyWrite II**, translate the files into ASCII files.

I use it with Writing Assistant. It only inserts comments. You decide what you want to change, then run the utility to remove the comments. Rightwriter is not copy protected.

Donald C. Gardner, Sutton, MA

Can A PCjr Have 736K?

Just a note to tell you how much I appreciate your newsletter. I look forward to getting it.

I'd like to know how you can put more than 640K into the Jr. My curiosity on this was stimulated by your mention of the little utility that allows the Jr to address up to 736K. Also, what about giving the excess memory to DOS?

I've had my Jr for about a year now but have found little information on how to put it to best use until now. As you know, to the uninitiated, technical manuals are terribly obtuse; so I appreciate your newsletter for helping straighten out some of my questions and for the ads from Jr hardware and software suppliers.

Thanks again.

Lance Fowler

(Continues on page 13)

Reader Feedback

Continued from page 12.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Yes, it is possible for your PCjr to have more than 640K. A relatively simple, though not for the novice, modification to one of the many types of memory expansion sidecars made for PCjrs (IBM, Microsoft jr Booster, etc.) can give you 736K of DOS addressable memory. Check with PCjr advertisers in this issue for details on the modification. Once the modification has been performed and your modified sidecar installed, you need a version of DOS which will address the extra memory. Larry Newcombe's jrconfig.sys, which is on JR POWER PACK (DISK #52) will do this for you. If you want more information on the memory expansion to 736K, see the July 1987 issue of jr Newsletter. If you started subscribing since then and don't have the July issue, we don't have any back issues to send you, but we will be reprinting all the major articles printed between June 1987 and May 1988 on a disk, called BEST OF JR NEWSLETTER (Volume 2), next month.

Add Jumpin BBS To jr Support Systems

I just received my February jrNewsletter and saw to my dismay, that my bbs was not listed. I don't know how you would have known about it as I haven't written since I wrote to tell you about jUMP (jUNIOR USERS of the MONTEREY PENINSULA). I now run jUMPIN (jUNIOR USERS of the MONTEREY PENINSULA INFORMATION NETWORK) BBS. The board has been public since June 27, 1987. It is unfortunately not run on jr. It is run on an XT clone. I didn't want to give the use of jr, so I bought an "inferior" machine to do the work!

I am currently running off a 20 meg hard drive, but plan to install another 20 megs soon, probably before this letter reaches you. I test all the files on my jr to see if they will work on jr. To the best of my knowledge, all the files on line will run on a PCjr in one or another of the configurations that we have. With the bbs files and the support files taking up a lot of room, I have about 14 megs of files on line, with another 6 or 7 megs in the "library". All of which run on jr!

The Facts:

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Name | jUMPIN BBS |
| Number | (408) 394-8842 |
| Hours | 24 hours a day |
| Baud | 300/1200 N 8 1 |
| Where | Seaside CA (Monterey Peninsula) |
| PC Pursuitable | YES 408 |
| Software | RBBS ver 15.8 |
| Sysop | George Layton |

Also, I will remind you of our users group.

jUMP (jUNIOR USERS of the MONTEREY PENINSULA)
P.O. BOX 1191, Seaside, CA 93955
Lloyd Reece President
George Layton Vice President

Meeting -normally- 2nd Wed. of the month at the Seaside Library, 515 Harcourt, Seaside, CA

Current membership.....about 35

Thanks for your efforts on behalf of ALL of us jr users!

George Layton, Seaside, CA

Warning About Printer Drivers

I have a PCjr with 640K (Tecmar upgrade) and one drive. I recently purchased a Mouse Systems mouse made especially for the Jr's connectors and a **PC Paint Plus** program. I purchased the products from PC Enterprises from the ad in the newsletter. It runs fine except I can't print anything. I have a STAR NX-10 printer which is one PC Paint Plus does NOT support. I called them and they referred me to some company in the state of Washington who MIGHT have a print driver to make it work.

I spent \$150 already and they suggest that I spend another \$50 to try a solution that MAY work. I'm waiting right now and asking questions before I spend any more money. If you have a solution (or an attempt at one) I'd love to try it. If not, caution your readers to CHECK PRINTER SUPPORT BEFORE BUYING!

Patrick Delahanty, Elkhart, IN

EDITOR'S NOTE: We don't know of a solution to this problem, but perhaps another reader has found one. If so, please let us know.

Owl Software



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User Groups

Continued from page 1.

groups around the country. We've provided a list of those we know about at the end of this article. Several of them provide services similar to those provided by the Metro Group. Others are less active, but they do offer help with problems and exchanges of information.

Joining a user group can provide a great deal of comfort for PCjr users, who often feel isolated because our computers were discontinued three years ago by IBM. But the active groups around the country are proving that PCjr users are continuing to expand and use their computers for everything from games to running small businesses. "I'm not about to trade my PCjr in," says Carl Haub. "I think it's a great computer and most of our members feel the same way."

Those of us who put jr Newsletter together for you every month realize that no matter how good the newsletter may be, it's not the same as being able to get together with people who own and operate the same computer you do. That's why we are providing the following list of the PCjr groups we know about.

This list is based on a combination of old and new information, so some of the groups listed may not still be active. And there may be some PCjr groups not listed here. If you live in an area not served by any of the following groups, we suggest you seek out whatever computer groups there are in your area. You may find that they have other PCjr users as members and, if you're lucky, a PCjr Special Interest Group (SIG) that has meetings on its own, apart from the larger group.

Please let us know if you discover any PCjr groups or SIGs that aren't listed here so we can update this list from time to time.

PCjr User Groups

PCjr Group of Alabama
132 Stratford Circle Birmingham,
AL 35209

Jr Users of Monterey Peninsula
George Layton, VP
2075 Hacienda Seaside, CA 93955
BBS (408) 394-8842

Eugene PCjr Club
1011 Valley River Way #220
Eugene, OR 97401

PCjr Users Group
4615 Valley Hi Drive
Sacramento, CA 95823

PCjr SIG
Larry Haas TCPC Users Group
Box 3163
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Palmetto PC Club -- PCjr
Box 3200
W Columbia, SC 29171

Robert Ment
PCjr SIG of New York
732 E 22d St.
Brooklyn, NY 11210

Mike Regan
Ventura City PCjr User Grp
301 Dana Point
Ventura, CA 93004

Fox Valley PCjr Assoc.
4022 Fox Valley Center Dr
Aurora, IL 60505

Bud Alexander
Jr Puters
1161 26th St.
Moline, IL 61265

John A Manges
Pensacola PCjr Users Grp
2870 Godwin Ln
Pensacola, FL 32506

John King, President
San Francisco PCjrUG
2336 Market St. - #20
San Francisco, CA 94114 For info call (415) 472-7035
BBS (415) 997-4874

Gary Kology
Tri-Town PCjr Users Grp
525 Foster St.
South Windsor, CT 06074

Carl Haub, President
Metro PCjr Users Group
11732 Cherry Grove Dr.
Gaithersburg, MD
BBS (301) 468-0984

Mohawk PCjr Users Grp
P.O. Box 12-305
Albany, NY 12212

(Continues on next page)

User Groups

Continued from page 14.

IBM PC Users Group PCjr SIG Boston Computer Society
One Center Plaza
Boston, MA 02108
For info call (617) 647-0384 (7-9 p.m.)

San Diego PCjr Users Grp
9474 Whaton Rd.
Santee, CA 92071

Chicago Area PCjr Users Grp
P.O. Box 95625
Hoffman Estates, IL 60195

Blue Grass PCjr Group
500-15 Hollow Creek Rd.
Lexington, KY 40511

Tom Soloman
PCjr Users Grp - #202
1619 NE Clubhouse Dr.
N Kansas City, MO 64112

Fred Traue
OK City PCjr Users Grp
420 Showalter
Midwest City, OK 73110

N.W OKC Jr Orphans Group
Colin Tuttle, President
6912 Talbot Court
Oklahoma City, OK 73162

PCjr Club
P.O. Box 95067
Schaumburg, IL 60195

IBM PC User Grp - PCjr Grp
P.O. Box 3047
Cincinatti, OH 45230

Irv Gellman
PCjr User Group
7703 Oak Lane Rd.
Cheltenham, PA 19012

PCjr SIG Fort Worth PC Users Grp
1525 Airway Blvd.
Roanoke, TX 76262

Norm Schatz, President
Puget Sound PCjr Users Grp
P.O. Box 6551
Lynwood, WA 98036

PCjr Compatibility Disk Expanded, Now Has Over 500 Software Titles

The PCjr Compatibility Disk, which we first told you about in the February issue, now includes more than 500 software titles with information on whether they are PCjr compatible, how much memory they require, and tips on how to use them on PCjrs.

The information on this disk (Disk #60 in the Jr Newsletter Software Store, page 11) comes from a variety of sources, including PCjr clubs, listings prepared by jr owners from their own experiences, letters we have received from readers, and a file we have kept of clippings and notes from many publications, bulletin board messages and so forth.

The disk also contains several articles on the subject of PCjr software compatibility. They offer an opportunity to learn about the minor, but sometimes important, differences between PCjrs and PCs, along with tips about how to compensate for these differences. Although nearly all software written for PCs will operate on PCjrs, there are some titles that either won't operate, or which require some modification before they will operate properly.

To our knowledge, this disk contains the most complete listing of PCjr compatibility information available anywhere.

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The Joy of Using Fantasy

By Diana Fisher

The first software review I ever wrote was a glowing critique of Fantasy. It was emotional and enthusiastic, without a hint of objectivity. A reader who wrote to comment called it a "love song to a graphics program". Two years later I'm singing the same tune. I love Fantasy. For me, it's the program that answers the classic question, "What do you DO with your computer?"

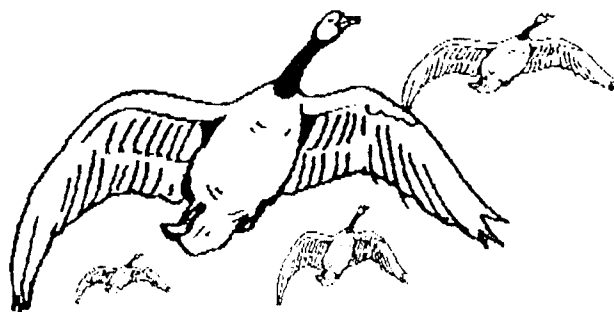
To call Fantasy a "graphics" program, a "font" program, or even a "low-end desktop publishing" program doesn't paint a complete picture. The Fantasy Publisher upgrade for Version 2 of the program adds powerful enhancements that truly allow you to stretch your imagination and creativity.

Fantasy does a professional job on business and personal correspondence, and it produces beautiful newsletters. You can create high quality greeting cards, signs, and banners, and you can design and save letterhead templates to use with your ASCII text files. Stationery supply catalogs are a good source of ideas for business letterhead designs which you can reproduce almost exactly by using Fantasy, and a supply of personalized stationery makes a wonderful gift.

"Fantasy truly allows you to stretch your imagination and creativity."

Because of Fantasy's ability to print a mirror image, you can easily produce t-shirt transfers. These inexpensive transfer sheets can be used with any dot matrix printer that will feed a single sheet. Also available for many printers are ribbons that will allow you to print and transfer your pattern from ordinary printer paper, and special pens can be used to add color to your design. All these supplies can be obtained from several companies that sell printer ribbons and paper supplies. An ordinary iron is all that's necessary to finish your creation! Fantasy Version 2 contains 28 fonts, some simple pictures, and pre-formatted templates (or page layouts) for newsletters. There are 34 additional font disks, each containing a collection of type fonts ranging from formal to bizarre, and 13 additional clip art disks containing borders and high quality picture collections grouped by theme. These pictures can be sized, rotated, cut and pasted, combined with other pictures, altered, and "colored" with a large selection of fill patterns. The program includes drawing functions, many sophisticated publishing features, and the ability to format an ASCII text file to a page layout containing multiple columns and pictures.

**Graphic from Fantasy,
Made by using multiple images
to create a flock of birds**



If you update Fantasy Version 2 with the Fantasy Publisher option, your PCjr must have a minimum of 512K. Fantasy Publisher adds several features, including pop-up menus, automatic page borders and an excellent text editor designed to work from within the program. Expanded memory support (EMS) is also included, enabling those with large amounts of memory above 640K to use very big fonts. If you find yourself getting deeply involved with these features of Fantasy, you may want to add EMS to your PCjr. An article in the March issue of jr Newsletter explains how this can be done.

Fantasy operates comfortably on a dual drive PCjr. To minimize disk switching with a single drive system, you can copy your favorite fonts to one or two disks. A mouse is desirable, but not absolutely necessary. While it would be ideal to run the program from a hard drive, a complete collection of fonts, pictures and supplementary programs could add up to 50 or 60 diskettes, which would consume a huge amount of space on a hard drive.

There are several wonderful add-ons to Fantasy. Two of these, BADGES & LABELS and HYPHENATOR, are available from Prosoft, the Fantasy program publisher. BADGES prints tractor-feed name badges in any Fantasy font you wish to use, and stores the name information in a file which may be used later for mailing labels. It's especially useful if you're running a convention, a class reunion, or printing place cards for a wedding. It does a beautiful job and it's an improvement over the standard "HELLO, MY NAME IS" badges that so often appear. LABELS prints continuous or side by side mailing labels using any of the hundreds of Fantasy fonts. The program accepts all popular label sizes, and the font styles can be sized or changed on each line. Your input can be an address list from a file or data base program, as long as it saves data in a format Fantasy Labels accepts. Rather than trying to figure out exactly what format that is, you may find it easier to create a list with a word processor and save it as an

ASCII file. Most word processors can do this. Just check your manual to see how it is done.

FANTASY HYPHENATOR checks your ASCII text file for spelling errors, allows you to make corrections, and automatically imbeds soft hyphens. These are special characters (Fantasy requires a backward apostrophe) that are inserted everywhere a word may legally be hyphenated. When the modified text file is formatted to a Fantasy template, or page layout, it will hyphenate only those words which may not comfortably fit on a line or in a column. This eliminates large gaps between words, particularly in a multi-column page. You may add your own words to the Hyphenator dictionary, and the program works from within the Fantasy Publisher for added convenience.

A feature of the Fantasy Publisher is the ability to accept graphics in the BASIC BSAVE format. If you program in BASIC, you'll know what that means. I didn't, but I discovered that anything usable by Fantasy will have an extension of .PIC and be a file between 16K-17K in size. I've found these compatible files everywhere -- in an old version of PC Paint, on some of the supplementary graphics disks for Printshop, on programs that run in BASIC, and on electronic bulletin boards. They provide a wonderful library of additional (and often unusual) pictures that can be cropped, sized and manipulated like all Fantasy artwork. Fantasy Version 2 and the Fantasy Publisher upgrade offer a lot for the PCjr owner. Some of the expensive publishing programs won't work on a PCjr or require a hard drive, and many of the low-end publishing programs use blocky, "matrix" pictures or type styles suitable only for a child's clubhouse news. Fantasy provides many sophisticated features, yet it is inexpensive and easy to learn. Laser printer support is provided, and the results obtained from a dot matrix printer are excellent.

For many of us, buying a PCjr was a major investment. Now, many of us have added a great deal of power to our little Juniors, and we still believe they provide us with what we want and need from a home computer. Fantasy and its collection of fonts, artwork and utilities can add a lot to what you can do with your PCjr. Even better, it can also set the scene for the best "add-on" of all...our own creativity.

Fantasy retails for \$69.95. The Art Volumes sell for \$29.95 and Font Volumes for \$49.95. Mail order prices may be 20 to 30% lower.

What is a CONFIG.SYS file?

When your PCjr boots DOS, one of the first things it does to check the diskette being booted for a CONFIG.SYS file. This file provides configuration commands which DOS will use until it is rebooted.

PCjrs with expanded memory require CONFIG.SYS files to tell DOS how to use the additional memory. There are five commands that can be put in CONFIG.SYS files: BREAK, BUFFERS, DEVICE, FILES, and SHELL.

An Affordable 24 Pin Printer

By Donna Beck

I have, for some time, been entertaining the idea of purchasing a new printer. My fantasy has been some whiz-bang laser printer that I could pick up for a few hundred dollars. This fancy laser printer also had to have maintenance packages (drum & toner replacements) available for a nominal fee. Well, if you have looked at the laser market, you know this was truly a fantasy.

When I decided in earnest that my old EPSON RX-80 just didn't cut it any more, I knew reality must take over. After looking at the printer market, it was a cinch that the new printer was going to be a dot matrix. But in looking at all the available models, I couldn't see very much improvement over what I had. Then I saw an ad for a new 24 pin model by NEC, model P2200. It was said to list for only \$499. I talked to a friend who swore that NEC Pinwriters would dance rings around any of the EPSON models. That did it, I searched my COMPUTER SHOPPER from cover to cover. I finally found an obscure company that listed this printer for \$329 plus shipping. I dug out my MasterCard.

Well, this printer is the next best thing to my fantasy laser. The P2200 will print in 10, 12, 15, 17, and 20 cpi, and will print proportional spaced characters. You can further define characters between LQ or draft. If noise is a problem, there is a "quiet" mode. All these choices are fingertip selectable from a panel on the front of the printer. NEC doesn't say NLQ, they call it LQ. If you are familiar with the NLQ selection on a 9 pin dot matrix...there is no comparison between the quality of the formed letters.

Additionally, this model sports a "front door" that allows insertion of single sheets of paper, labels, envelopes, etc. Sheets may be inserted singly, or this feature will also work without unloading continuous forms. A cut sheet feeder is available at extra charge. It has a push/pull tractor feed and contains 5 resident fonts. There is a cartridge port so that additional font cartridges may be purchased separately if the resident 5 are not enough. The printer runs at 170 cps in draft mode and 57 cps in LQ. It has a 4K or 8K buffer. The P2200 came with a Courier font as the default selection. The default selections are user changeable. The 80 column printer is about the same size as my RX-80. It will emulate the EPSON or IBM character set.

There are faster printers, but not too many at that price. The P2200 is only available in 80 column width, but that was fine with me. The only drawback I have found is the way the user changeable defaults are changed. To change the power-on default, you must first get a printout of the current setup, then respond to questions that are printed out on paper for you. Responses are simple choices accomplished through the front panel. It is just a little awkward to get a one page printout then having to go through and read and respond to all the questions, even just to change one item. However, printers I found with more easily changeable

(Continued on page 18)

The DOS Dir Command Do You Know The Switches?

One of the first things most of us learn to do is use the DOS dir command to display the directory of files on a diskette. But there are a number of "switches" you can use with the dir command which are handy, but often neglected.

For example, if you have a lot of files on a disk, you can use dir/p to stop at the end of each screen full of file names, rather than scrolling through to the end of the list.

You can use dir/w to print the list of files in five columns across your screen. This also makes it easier to read a long list of files on a disk. The /w switch eliminates the size and date, whereas the /p does not.

You can also combine the switches by typing dir/w/p, which will give you five columns across the screen and pause when the screen is full.

Wildcards can also be used with the dir command. For instance, if you just want to display the files with .txt extensions, you would type dir*.txt.

If you discover a great public domain or user-supported software program that you think other PCjr owners would enjoy, please let us know by writing to jr Newsletter, Box 163, Southbury, CT 06488.

Affordable 24 Pin Printer

Continued from page 17.

defaults cost about \$1000. Considering that, this may not be that big a deal because in reality, probably 95% of us (including me) will almost never change those defaults once we have them set to our liking.

I would rate the documentation as very good. The manual has very good illustrations showing the different options of paper loading. It also has a section that goes into programming. However, I have found that I have not needed the printer codes at all. With all the selections available from the front panel I have not had to use a single code.

If you're in the market for a new printer, consider this one. The NEC P2200 has a wealth of features at a very affordable price.

*(The Above Article Was Originally
Published in the OKC jr Orphans Chronicle.)*

Sierra's Realistic Police Quest Let's You Be A Small Town Cop

If you think being a policeman/woman in a small town means directing traffic and helping old folks across the street, you have no idea what Police Quest has in store for you.

This game was designed with the help of Jim Walls, who was a cop for 15 years. He knows the regulations, psychological maneuvers, and street smarts that are all part of being a good cop -- and you'll have to learn many of these things yourself as you patrol the streets of Lytton, California, the setting for Police Quest.

The Policeman's Indoctrination Guide that comes with the game will help keep you from making some mistakes, but you'll have to rely upon your wits when you go undercover to confront the head of a drug ring -- the dreaded "Death Angel."

This game simulates many different situations faced by police on their beats. You will have to cruise the town in your patrol car, write traffic tickets and attend morning briefings. If you're late for a briefing or if you don't follow procedures exactly, you lose points. Did you know that when you nab a car thief, you must call for backup and make the suspect lie face down on the ground? If you don't you lose points.

Another challenging feature of Police Quest is that it has a built-in plot that keeps going as time passes. Things are happening in Lytton as you patrol in your police cruiser -- and you better keep up with them. This makes it possible to enjoy playing Police Quest many times without repeating all the same events in the same way each time.

Police Quest provides a new, realistic twist to adventure games and maintains the high standards of graphic quality set by the Kings Quest Series.

Publisher: Sierra Online. Retail price: \$49.95, mail order prices lower. Requires 256K.

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"Upon this rock" . . . Matt. 16:18

What - Me Program? Who Are You Kidding?

By John King

Are you a programmer? You are probably thinking of **BASIC**, **Turbo Pascal**, **Turbo C**, or the **Assembler Language** programs from this column. However, there is another form of programming which almost all of us do. We write batch files.

Your **AUTOEXEC.BAT** file is a batch language program. Like any program, it contains a series of instructions that the computer executes. These instructions can be DOS commands such as **DATE**, **TIME**, **COPY**, **DIR**, or the name of a program to run. Whether you are a professional programmer or a new PCjr owner, you can use batch files to simplify your computer operations.

Now here is the best news for a new user. In addition to the familiar DOS commands, this programming language has only seven new commands. Of course, it is limited in what it can do, but it is easy to learn. All the new commands, with many examples, are covered under **Batch Commands** on Pages 2-13 to 2-32 of the DOS 2.1 manual.

You can write a batch file in your word processor since it is in plain English, or as close to English as DOS instructions can be. Each line of the file is just a command like the ones you type at the **A>** prompt.

When you save the file to disk, you must give it a name with the extension **.BAT**, so DOS will know how to read the instructions it contains. Also you must save the file in **ASCII format** (check the manual for your word processor). To run batch files, you enter its name at the DOS prompt. Each line in the file is executed just as if you were typing it at the keyboard.

A Simple Example

Lets try a very simple example to be sure that everyone is together at this point. If you aren't sure about that **ASCII** format business with your word processor, you might use **EDLIN**, the small editor on your DOS disk, which writes only in **ASCII**. Or, for this simple example, just use the **COPY CON** command and write the file directly from the keyboard. Hit the **Enter** key at the end of every line. Here's what to type:

```
COPY CON MYFIRST.BAT
REM Show me batch files on A.
DIR A:*.BAT
REM Now, show the .COM files
DIR A:*.COM
Ctrl-Z
```

Dos will report "1 File(s) copied" when you hit the **Enter** key after the **Ctrl-Z** (hold the **Ctrl** key down and hit **Z**, or type **Fn-6**). You can type in upper or lower case.

REM is one of the seven new batch file commands. It stands for **REMark**, a line to display only, not to execute. Only six new commands left, and we won't cover two of them in this article.

Now, when you enter **MYFIRST** at the DOS prompt, the batch file will display the first remark, list all the **.BAT** files, display the second remark, and list all the **.COM** files on drive **A**.

If you want a cleaner display, you can use the **ECHO** command. First, turn **ECHO OFF** to prevent the commands in the batch file from being displayed. Then, **ECHO** comments to display them, rather than using the **REM** command.

With **ECHO OFF**, **REM**'s are not displayed. You can turn **ECHO ON** if you want to see these. Here is **SECOND.BAT** to illustrate the second new batch file command. Here's what to type:

```
COPY CON SECOND.BAT
ECHO OFF
CLS
ECHO The .EXE files on A.
DIR A:*.EXE
Ctrl-Z
```

Now, anytime you want to, you can type **SECOND**, then press **Enter**, and your PCjr will display all the **.EXE** files on this disk. If you want a blank line between commands, **ECHO** two spaces in DOS 2.1. (I am going to assume that you are using DOS 2.1. If you have upgraded to a later version, you may want to make a few changes to take advantage of some of the extensions added to the batch language.)

The third new batch command is **PAUSE**. All it does is stop execution of the file and display "Strike a key when ready..." until a key is struck. It is the same as hitting **FN-Pause** on the PCjr keyboard (**Ctrl-Numlock** on the PC). This can be very useful in allowing time to read the screen. Also, a **PAUSE** provides a convenient place to end a batch file and exit to DOS by **FN-Break** (**Ctrl-Bread** on PC keyboards).

Try this batch file. If you don't want to do the second **DIR**, enter **Fn-Break** when the file pauses. Here's what to type:

```
COPY CON THIRD.BAT
DIR A:*.EXE
PAUSE
DIR A:*.COM
Ctrl-Z
```

REM, **ECHO**, and **PAUSE** are the three easiest batch commands, but they allow important control of the screen display.

A special feature of batch files is the "replaceable parameters". When you type the name of a batch file at the DOS prompt, DOS remembers any groups of characters after the file name. For example, if you had a batch file called

(Continues on page 20)

Who Me? Program?

Continued from page 19

OLDER.BAT, and you typed:

```
OLDER Morning John 40 50
DOS will hold Morning, John, 40 and 50 in memory. Now
let's write an OLDER.BAT that can use these values.
```

```
COPY CON OLDER.BAT
REM Good %1, %2.
REM How's it feel to be over %3?
REM Oh, well, %4 is still ahead.
Ctrl-Z
```

DOS will replace the %1 with Morning, %2 with John, etc. Why %1? I don't know, but DOS needs some way to distinguish a simple number from a variable, and the % sign was selected to be the identifier. The variables can be groups of any characters separated by spaces.

The command "OLDER Morning John 40 50" will display:

```
Good Morning, John.
How's it feel to be over 40?
Oh, well, 50 is still ahead.
```

You can use up to 9 parameters, %1 to %9, in this simple fashion. If you have a need for more than nine items on the command line, you can use the SHIFT command, but that is so unusual that I don't intend to cover it here. Read your DOS manual!!

The %0 has a special significance. It is the name of the batch file minus the extension. If a drive letter was specified, that is included. For OLDER.BAT called from the default drive, %0 is OLDER. This is not useful very often, but it explains the difference between %0 and %1 to %9.

Very Useful Feature

We will use replaceable parameters frequently in batch files because they allow us to write a general file and insert the specific values when the batch file is run.

Now try this example:

```
COPY CON D-TEST.BAT
IF %1! = -D! GOTO DO-DATE
IF %1! = -d! GOTO DO-DATE
GOTO END
:DO-DATE
DATE
:END
Ctrl-Z
```

This is not a useful batch file. Entering D-TEST D or D-TEST d will call the DOS date function. Without the D or d, it does nothing at all. However, it illustrates the last two new batch file commands that we'll cover in this article, the IF statement and the GOTO instruction.

IF allows testing for one or more characters, whether a file exists or a peculiar thing called the "errorlevel". Errorlevel, we'll hold for a later discussion. In D-TEST.BAT,

we test the replaceable parameter from the command line against D and d. If %1 is equal to one of these, the command on the line following that IF will be executed. In plain English, the IF statement is read: if the first value on the command line after the batch file name (%1!) is equal to D!, execute the GOTO DO-DATE instruction. If it is not equal, skip to the next line in the batch file.

You might wonder why I used "%1!" rather than just %1. That is a peculiarity of DOS. Repeating any symbol on both sides of the double equal signs (another DOS peculiarity) avoids "Syntax error" messages when no value is used for %1 on the command line.

GOTO is the last new batch command we will cover. It allows jumping around a batch file from the line with the GOTO to the "LABEL" which is named immediately after GOTO. Labels always start with a colon and can be up to eight characters long. They are not case sensitive, so :DO-DATE and :do-date are the same.

If neither D nor d are on the command line, the IF statements will not be true, and neither of the first two GOTO's will be executed.

At this point, you may begin to see the power of these few new commands. Even a simple batch file can perform alternatives based on how it is called or upon what files exist on a disk. Now, let's write something more useful.

A File To Enter Date

Finding the date 1-1-80 on files always annoys me because I know they are not that old, only somebody didn't bother using DATE when they booted up. There are public domain utilities to simplify entering the date and time, but batch files are available to everyone. So, let's write one for those of us who don't have battery powered clock chips in our PCjrs.

Since the hour a file is created is really not as important as the date, here is DAY.BAT with today's date on the command line: DAY 3-1-88 or DAY 3/15/88. If you boot up again on the same day, just type DAY and the date will be entered automatically.

```
COPY CON DAY.BAT
IF %1! = -! GOTO
NO-DATE
ECHO %1> TODAY
REM Leave no space between %1 and ">".
:NO-DATE
DATE < TODAY
Ctrl-Z
```

The ">" (greater than) and "<" (less than) symbols are the DOS redirection characters. The ">" in the ECHO line redirects the output of the ECHO command to a file called TODAY. If TODAY does not already exist, it is created. Today will contain %1, the date typed when DAY.BAT was called. When DATE is called, the contents of TODAY will appear as input on the "Enter new date:_" line because the

"<" redirects the contents of TODAY into DATE

If you enter DAY without a date, the GOTO NO-DATE jump occurs, and the TODAY file is used for the DATE input. Each time a new date is given, a new TODAY file is created and used as input to DATE.

DAY.BAT is very simple, but like many programs that are very simple, it doesn't handle errors very well. If you forget to include the date the first time you run the program, the TODAY file will not exist, and you will exit into DOS without calling DATE. Of course, if an old date is in TODAY, that will be entered automatically.

We can improve the file a bit using the other batch file commands we have learned to avoid the "no TODAY" problem and make the display more informative.

```
COPY CON D.BAT
ECHO OFF
CLS
IF %1! = ! GOTO NO-DATE
ECHO Saving today's date, %1.
ECHO %1 > TODAY
REM No space betw. %1 and ">".
:NO-DATE
IF EXIST TODAY GOTO SAME-DAY
ECHO No date specified or stored.
DATE
GOTO END
:SAME-DAY
DATE < TODAY
:END
Ctrl-Z
```

Now, if you forget to add the date and TODAY does not exist, you get a reminder, and DATE is called for input from the keyboard. Of course, if an old TODAY file exists, the wrong date will still be set.

You might make the last line of your AUTOEXEC.BAT file a reminder to call D.BAT, so you don't forget. Finally, if you want to set the time as well, just add the line TIME at the end of the file just before the Ctrl-Z.

(The Above Article Was Originally Published in the San Francisco PCjr Users Group Newsletter. For More Information Call John King (415) 472-7035.)

No, REN is Not a Little Bird

The DOS command RENAME or REN is used to change the name of a file. It does not affect the contents of that file. It is an internal DOS command, which means you can use it at the DOS prompt without inserting your DOS disk into the logged drive.

To rename a file, type REN and the existing filename and extension, then type a spacer, then type the new filename and extension.

How Downloading Works

One of the joys of home computing (or office computing for that matter) is communicating through your telephone using a modem. When you first make contact with a distant Bulletin Board System (BBS), it's like entering an exotic land. And it's often a land full of goodies you can scoop up before leaving.

Each BBS has its own protocols for viewing files, leaving messages, etc. Usually the directions are right there on your screen telling you how to do these things. As far as downloading files (the goodies) is concerned, though, you usually have a choice -- and sometimes the choices are confusing if you are unfamiliar with how downloading works.

Basically, there are two kinds of downloads -- ASCII and Binary.

ASCII files usually contain text and can be downloaded by a direct ASCII capture, sometimes called a buffer dump. Your telecommunications software will have a downloading command that will most likely bring up a window showing your choices. ASCII, XMODEM, YMODEM and KERMIT are some of the most common. Since we don't intend to get very technical in this article, let's just make the basic distinction between these protocols.

The ASCII protocol is a direct dumping of information from one computer to another (yours). Your diskette will receive whatever information comes through the telephone lines to your modem and it probably will include some errors due to noise or static on the lines. When you've finished receiving you can read the file with your word processor, or by using the DOS TYPE command.

The other category of downloading protocols is called binary file transfer. All the other choices offered by your telecommunications software will fall in this category. Binary transfers check the incoming information for errors before allowing it to be recorded on your diskette. Essentially, the BBS's computer sends a block of data to your computer. Then the two computers compare the data. If the data in the block doesn't compare exactly, the block will be sent again.

Binary downloads are necessary for all downloads of software. It is also advisable for long text files, otherwise you can get large blocks of gibberish.

As far as we know, none of the binary methods is clearly better than another. We use **Procomm** with the XMODEM protocol almost all the time and have experienced no problems.

Do you have any tips or interesting PCjr experiences you'd like to share with fellow jr owners? If so, please send them to jrNewsletter, Box 163, Southbury, CT 06488.

A Computer User Confesses

By Tom Crain

I've got this computer and I've been using it awhile. I was just a simple beginner. But not any longer. Now I've used about two-thirds of the DOS commands and I've even mastered a few of them. I'm using a word processor in my work. I've added some small improvements to a commercial program written in BASIC. I've replaced my 8088 with a V20. Now I've decided I need a hard disk, a modem, and an accelerator board. So, now what am I?

I used to be a simple beginner. Not anymore. Now I use batch files as a matter of course. I frequently use RAM drives of varying sizes. I've actually used DEBUG successfully! And I find myself becoming obsessed. Recently, I couldn't decide whether or not to delete a small, unused utility from my utility disk (better to keep it, but I haven't used it even once... is it backed up... what time is it anyway... 3 A.M. Just a few more minutes... now where is that arc'd utility back-up disk... hmmm... what's in this arc'd file...). I can get an enormous sense of satisfaction digging out and running an obscure little feature of a program for which I have absolutely no use whatsoever. What am I now?

I was just a simple beginner. Not now. Now I buy four or five computer magazines, pore over the ads, read the reviews, dream about what to buy, all the while figuring out how I can manipulate budget priorities which I know full well won't budge.

I used to be a simple beginner. What am I now? OK. I admit it. I'm a... a... user. There, I've said it. I'm hooked. I'm a computer junkie. An addict, craving an electronic fix. Sound familiar? If it does, if all this describes you as well, then you are a computer junkie too. Good for you for admitting it! But if you insist that you're different, then you're lying through your CRT. That's called a denial and you haven't accepted the truth of your habit.

But there's hope. I heard about a local group that helps computer users. I joined. The purpose of the group is to help us with our habits. Some of these people are really heavy users. They've been dbasing for years. That's something that I haven't tried yet. Must be terrific. They certainly use a lot of exclamation points while doing it. Other members have been assembling and disassembling their brains for years. They speak a language all of their own. You can even join smaller, special groups which cater to members with very special needs. At a recent general meeting a big pusher (with international connections) gave away some hardware, free! Now you can even get software free: all you have to do is tell the local connections how good it was!

When I first started using, I didn't know how it was habit forming. After all, I was just a simple beginner. And no one

warned me that I would slowly develop a dependency with cravings. No one warned me that I would need more hardware to satisfy my urges, that I would need more and more software to satisfy my increasing need to USE! How could I know that I was slipping into.. Computer Madness. No one ever warned me. Too bad. I could have begun using sooner. If only I'd known!

(The Above Article Was Originally Published in the Modesto PCUG Newsletter)

Format Disks Faster

By Ray Stroud

Probably the dullest task associated with computing is formatting. Of course there are some programs, such as FASTFORMAT designed to ease this task. And there are others.

One of the "others" is a short, neat program that appeared in the Star-Dot-Star column of PC WORLD in the October issue. The program continually runs A and B drives. When it finishes formatting in one drive, the computer BEEPS, which is to let you know to change disks. I like this program(s) because it permits me to do some other tasks while the computer is formatting, then the beep lets me know when to change disks.

Here is how to do it. Make a file called FORM. BAT which is an endless loop.

```
:top
FORMAT B: %1 %2 < CR_Y_CR
^G
FORMAT A: %1 %2 < CR_Y_CR
^G
GOTO top
```

The variables %1 and %2 are for using parameters such as /S and /4. The author suggests that you not use /V since this program will not handle it. The redirection symbol gets a carriage return, a "yes" and a carriage return from the file. These are keystrokes you would normally have to make, using the DOS format. The "^" symbol is not the character above the number 6. This represents Ctl G which is the bell or beeper. Hold down the Ctl key and depress G.

You will need a file called CR_Y_CR. To make this file, use COPY CON or EDLIN, type CR,Y,CR, hit F6, then <enter> and get out of the file. NOTICE!! The CR in this file is the actual CARRIAGE RETURN key, NOT a printed CR. The CARRIAGE RETURN is in a response to the normal DOS FORMAT message, "Insert diskette in drive A: and strike any key when ready." The Y is another response to the prompt, "Format another?" This is one of those simple, creative programs that some bright people have written to solve problems that plague all of us. Thanks to the author.

(The above article was originally published in the OKC Jr Orphans Chronicle.)

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