

# The Personal Computer Club of Toronto



# READ ME

FEATURING ARTICLES BY COMPUTER CLUB MEMBERS

"GETTING MORE OUT OF YOUR COMPUTER"

## Do You Spend Your Time Fixing or Using Your Computer?

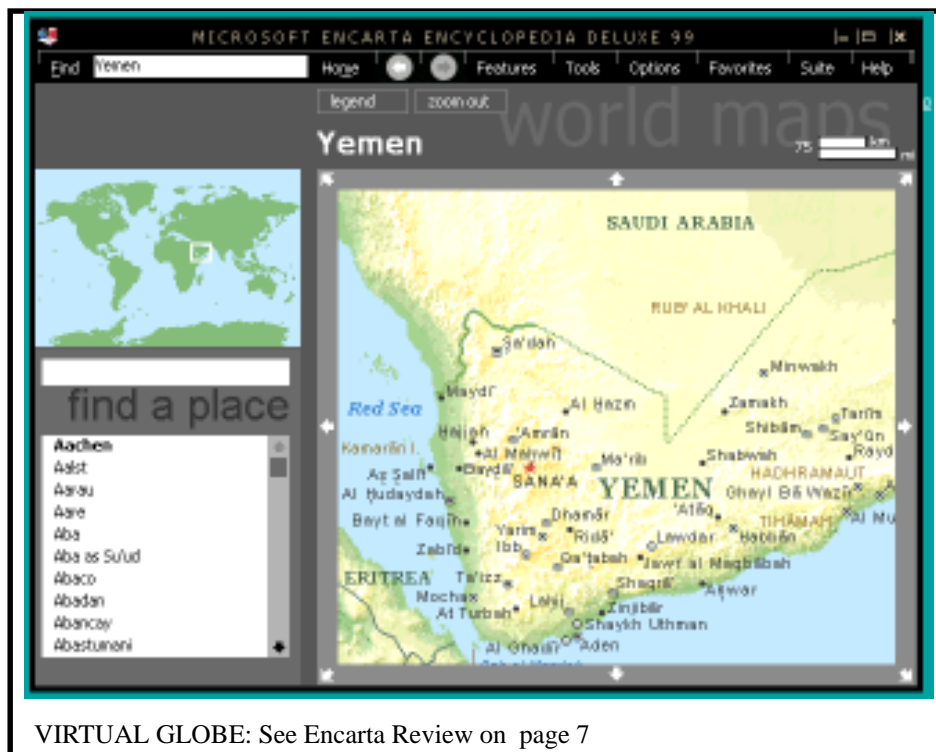
By Mireille Massue

I like men. I really do. However, even the most intelligent of your gender defy logic when it comes to your ability to fix things. It's like asking for directions. We, being the female gender know you're lost; you, being part of the stubborn male gender refuse to acknowledge you got us lost. And, for the life of me, I can't understand why you don't stop at one of the number of gas stations around and ASK! We would get there a lot sooner, unless it's going to the in-laws and then I applaud your manly talent of refusing to admit you don't know where you're going. It's like your ability in thinking you can fix your computer. The number of conversations I hear at the club about how you tried to install, or upgrade and the complaints that go along with it, because it just didn't work the way it's supposed to. And, of course, the look of horror, when it's suggested you bring your computer to a qualified technician to get it fixed. It makes me wonder. Did you spend all that money to fix your computer or to use it?

Women, for the most part, are smarter about these things. If our computer doesn't work, we are quite willing to pay for a qualified technician to fix it. That doesn't mean we can't fix it, it just means we choose to spend our time using our computer for what it was intended, instead of wasting time in doing something that someone else is quite qualified to do.

But going to a technician costs money you say. Yes, it does; approximately \$50.00 to \$100.00 per hour. They take too much time, you say. Not if you are prepared. And that is what this article is about. The ability to learn about your computer, and use it.

My system was getting a little sluggish. I needed to clean to it out, upgrade my hard drive and increase my RAM if I wanted to do the things I planned for the new year. I didn't have time to unplug my computer, bring it to the company that usually fixes it, so I called Clive Apps, leader of the PCCT Hardware SIG and a very qualified computer technician himself. Since Clive does this for a living and has major companies as clients, I thought I would ask him what we need to look for when hiring a technician, so as to save money and spend more time enjoying our computers. Here are some of his suggestions:



VIRTUAL GLOBE: See Encarta Review on page 7

### Hiring a technician

1. Does this person have a computer background? Sounds silly. However there are a lot of people who pass themselves off as computer technicians.
2. Does this person have referrals? Yes, this person might have been recommended by a friend, but how many times have you had a recommendation from someone and it turned out disastrously?
3. How many hours is this person charging for? At \$50 to \$100 an hour, you want to make sure they're not hanging around to get the maximum number of hours.
4. Will this person give you a free estimate and put it in writing?

5. Does this person guarantee their work? Will they charge additional if
6. Does this person inspire confidence in you? Their ability to communicate in an easy intelligent manner adds points with me. If you can't explain in a clear concise manner what you will do, I'm not interested in having you near my computer.
7. Does this person do house calls? If you have a full time job, and other activities, it makes more sense having someone come to your home and if

concluded on page 3, column 3

## JANUARY MEETING

### "Intel Architecture: Foundation for Exciting Computing in the New Millenium"

Mr. Victor Bapat, IT Architecture Manager, Intel Canada Ltd.  
Date: Tuesday, January 19th, 1999 – 7:00 pm

INTEL, a company almost every computer owner has come to know. From the introduction of the microprocessor Intel has been in the forefront of chip technology. It has become the industry leader, setting the Windows platform standard by which computer manufacturers, businesses, and home users have looked and upgraded to.

Intel, concluded page 7 column 2

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Number 1



Join us at the PCCT  
on January 19th  
See back page for  
Free Coupon!

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the Board  
by Robin Wright

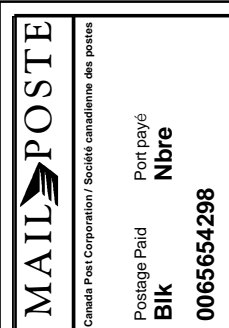
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The Personal Computer  
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## General Meeting Tuesday, January 19th, 1999

Admission for non-members – \$5.00

**6:30pm: Meet and discuss** - your ideas for PCCT with some of our Board members and volunteers.

**7:00pm: General Meeting** - starts with a Question & Answer session.

**PCCT thanks these vendors for donating equipment to the club:**

**Adaptec – SCSI controller**

## The Personal Computer Club of Toronto



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### read.me

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The Personal Computer Club Of Toronto (**PCCT**) is an independent, not-for-profit association for people who use PC microcomputers. Our philosophy: *Users helping Users.*

"read.me" is the newsletter of the PCCT, published 11 times a year, featuring articles by club members and members of other user groups from around the world. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily of the PCCT.

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**Please note:** Fees, dates, and specifications are subject to change without notice.

The PCCT does not assume responsibility for damages arising from the publication or non-publication of any advertisement in this newsletter. Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement by the club.

## Special Interest Groups

### The Basics SIG

SIG Leader: Frank Latchford (416) 340-0999

Learning Windows 95/98 SIG. This SIG is intended for those who are new to Windows 95/98. We will discuss how Windows works and how to use it on a daily basis. The intention of this SIG is to teach — not to entertain. We will start at the beginning and go to the end. You should have learned to use some aspect of Windows by the end of the evening.

### Daytime SIG

SIG Leader: Bob Matheson (416) 222-4628

This is a discussion group that covers a wide range of topics relating to IBM and compatible computers. It is for novice, intermediate and advanced users.

### Digital Imaging SIG

SIG Leader: Ron Caine (ron\_caine@msn.com)

Interested in scanners, photography, digital cameras and the software to run all that? Then this SIG is for you. We will go over all facets of manipulating pixels to give you the results you want.

### Genealogy SIG

SIG Leader: John Mahler (jmahler@globalserve.net)

The Genealogy SIG is for anyone who is interested in the search of the past. We delve into the family tree and cover the tools, means and resources available to those who search. If you have an interest in your past and want to learn more, come on by and sit a spell.

### Hardware SIG

SIG Leader: Clive Apps (416) 510-0020

Installing and fixing your computer hardware can be fun, a learning experience and can save you money. Find out what goes on under the hood and what you can do about it. Bring your machine and do it there.

### Internet SIG

SIG Leader: Avnish Kashyap (905) 671-1736 kash@softhome.com

This SIG concentrates on how to access and utilize the various resources of the Internet. If you are having difficulties using the Internet or simply wish to learn more, then this SIG is for you. The first 15 minutes of the SIG are used to answer general communications issues.

### Investment SIG

SIG Leader: Ken Morgan (416) 491-1932

Analytical techniques, use of spreadsheets, graphical display of investment analysis all play an important part in these meetings. Also, considerable use is made of video training tapes on investment subjects.

### Microsoft Office SIG

SIG Leader: Jonathan Hines simple@ibm.net

Learn how to use the Microsoft Office suite of programs: Word, Excel, Access and Powerpoint. A SIG geared to helping small business make effective use of this software.

### New User SIG

SIG Leader: Henry Crane (905) 884-5443

This is a group arranged specifically for novice computer users. It holds informal friendly discussions on the essentials of personal computing. You will get clear concise explanations of computer terms on your personal level of understanding, help with what to learn and how to learn it quickly and cheaply, purchasing, upgrading and problem solving advice that can save you many hours and dollars.

### Visual Basic SIG

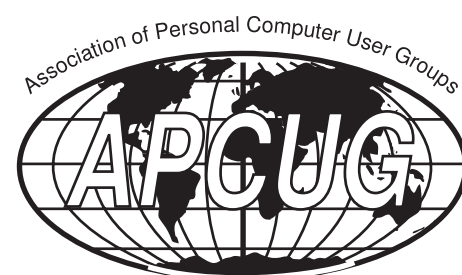
SIG Leaders: Trevor Pedley & Jim McIntosh

Learn Visual Basic, a popular programming language. This group follows a beginners level text with a structured learning environment. Easily learn sophisticated ways to program applications in the Windows environment by attending this group.

### Windows / Win95 SIG

SIG Leader: Karl Stanley 1-905-836-5222

Here is where you can learn how to get and use the maximum from MS Windows. You will enjoy an information-packed, entertaining evening while you learn how to use all the Windows tools, and make Windows run more efficiently on your machine. You can participate in the monthly training session and become an expert user in less than a year. You will learn tips and tricks that will save you hours. You will meet many power users, see the latest Windows products and perhaps win a valuable door prize.



# Notes from the Board November 98

by President Robin Wright (PCCT)

The final meeting of the Directors for the 97/98-year was held on December the 7th. The main topic was the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting and the procedure for the election of Directors. At the beginning of the year department committees were formed. The ADMINISTRATION & TREASURY committee has been lead by Arthur Robertson. He has received strong support from Joyce LeChasseur as bookkeeper. This team looks after the essential paperwork and banking for all club activities.

Joan Latchford has edited the NEWSLETTER with layout by Craig Faichney for the first half of the year. Ten editions were produced with electronic versions on the club's website.

Craig Faichney has coordinated the SIGs. Three new SIGs have been started, three closed and four new leaders volunteered their time and effort. The SIG Hand book was revised and reissued; and a calendar for the next 12 months has been prepared. This should avoid last minute changes. Two special one-night SIGs were held for COREL and PATHWAY COMMUNICATIONS. Otto Lang who has been challenged to find volunteers has coordinated the Mentor Programme.

A Virtual Design Team led by Mireille Massue has accomplished the revitalization of the WEBSITE. Timely updates have been made and there are innovative plans for the future. The professional design input from Daniel ffolliott has greatly enhanced the impact of the site.

Eleven general meeting PROGRAMS with vendor presentations were arranged by Dave Hanson. Thousands of dollars of door prizes were available to members in attendance, including one meeting at which everybody was given a copy of Microsoft Publisher. Regular auctions were held as well as the sale of software from the club's library. Martin Moss has run a member's sales table. Several vendors have displayed and sold their products and services.

The SOFTWARE Library team has been lead by Bernard Notttage. Many software programs have been reviewed. Copies of suitable freeware have been demonstrated and sold each month.

The ON-LINE SERVICES committee has been lead by Joe Andrade. The voice info-line now uses 01 Communiqué software although the fax-back service has yet to be implemented. The e-mail distribution list has kept us informed of upcoming events every month based on information given to Janina Walker. 'Kash' has moderated **pcctlist** and **internetsiglist** and the IRC chat line is always available for members, (there is usually somebody on line Sunday evenings). The BBS continues to function as the virtual club. The Sysop is Arthur Robertson with assistance from Otto Lang and Blaise Iannaci.

Mireille Massue has looked after MEDIA RELATIONS, contact has been made with the local newspapers and the Cable networks.

Doug Colquhoun, who took over from Murray Dobbs this year, has managed the SHOWS committee. Many volunteers have staffed four ComputerFest shows and COMDEX. The booth has been refurbished and is a focal point for members as well as a recruiting attraction.

Robin Wright has strengthened VENDOR RELATIONS. Advertising in the newsletter and vendor presence at our meetings is one of this committee's activities.

Jack Grossman has coordinated MEMBERSHIP SERVICES for much of the year. Janina Walker has managed the database on which these services depend.

There are a number of smaller committees that have been looking at specific needs, which are required to keep the club running smoothly.

All volunteers deserve thanks for their contribution of time and effort. Without volunteer effort there would not be any activities. This year we have a new Board of Directors elected from a large group of candidates. It is a show of confidence in the future of our club that so many are willing to help. We are moving on to new ideas while still being a club of 'Users helping Users.' The new Directors will need our support as they guide our activities to meet the interests of all members.

NOTES FROM THE BOARD: LATE DECEMBER '98 EDITION The 1998 and 1999 Boards of Directors met at an informal changeover session on Monday, the 28th of December. Dave Hanson, the outgoing Secretary handed over the hard copies of the Board meeting minutes for the passed year. These will be stored with the previous year's archival copies. Most of the evening was used to exchange views on the future of various club activities, especially the key areas where we must have a back-up process available if we are not able to follow the regular routine. It was agreed that the Board should continue to meet face to face on a monthly basis. The meetings are scheduled for the last Monday of the month; the location will be Arthur & Betty Robertson's home subject to review from time to time. We are grateful for this hospitality; it will save the club the

cost of renting a facility and allow those attending to enjoy Betty's coffee. The first formal meeting of the new Board was convened in the latter part of the evening. The four positions defined in the bylaws were filled after discussion. Elected were:

**President – Robin Wright**  
**Vice-President – Doug Colquhoun**  
**Treasurer – Arthur Robertson**  
**Corporate Secretary – Karl Stanley**

The signing officers were appointed. All contractual documents require two signatures. To ensure all departments are represented at the Board each Director will have some departmental responsibilities. Robin Wright will continue to be responsible for Membership Services and Vendor Relations. Doug Colquhoun will continue to represent the 'Shows' department. Arthur Robertson will continue to look after Administration. Karl Stanley will be responsible for the continuing review of the ByLaws. Craig Faichney will continue with SIG Coordination and the Newsletter. Mireille Massue will continue with the Website team. Steve Rakus will be responsible for On-Line Services. The next board meeting was scheduled for Monday, the 25th of January 1999. The new Board are looking forward to the New Year, they will need the continuing support of all members as the club continues to evolve and grow.

## Fixing or Using? concluded from page 1

possible, do the installation or repair.  
**Save Money**

If you can't get past the hourly rate a qualified technician charges, get over it. You're not saving any money by trying to fix it yourself and not having it work. However, there are steps you can take, to minimize the amount a technician would charge. Here are some of them:

1. Fill out the Computer Checklist that Clive and I prepared. This was supposed to be in **read.me** as part of the first article. However it didn't get included so by the time you read this, the web team will have figured out how to put the checklist on the [www.pcct.org](http://www.pcct.org) site.

The checklist includes the parts of the computer with 11 columns of information for you to fill in. When upgrading my system, Clive and I went through it to make sure the checklist provided the information you and your technician would need. I now know exactly what I have and who I have to go to if I need an additional driver or upgrade.

2. Back up all important information.

3. Have your manuals, updated drivers (if needed.) I used to have all my manuals, drivers etc. in one box. However since this upgrade, I've put each manual and associated disks in file folders and filed these in an accordion folder. When Clive was upgrading my system, I was able to pull out the right manual with the appropriate disks. It saved Clive and myself a lot of time, because all my important material was neatly organized and readily accessible.

4. If you are going to upgrade, try to buy from your technician. It may be a little bit more expensive, but it saves you time and you're guaranteed that it will work. I'm looking for a scanner. Clive has suggested three companies I can choose from. He won't put anything that is of questionable quality in my com-

puter, because he can't guarantee it will work and he doesn't want to hear me complain. He ruins all my fun.

5. Make sure you know your prices, and the kinds of upgrades you would like. The worst thing you can do is give all that responsibility to the person you are doing business with. Whenever you hire someone, you work in partnership. After all, you are paying for it. Make sure you know what you're paying for. For those of you, who are interested in learning more about prices, vendors and suchlike, the web team is compiling a list of web sites for your use. We hope we will have that up in our Links Directory by the time you read this article.

If you are still insistent in trying to repair or upgrade your system, then go to the **PCCT Hardware SIG** and learn how to do it properly. It will save you a lot of time, frustration and aggravation.

So, ask me how my computer is doing? Just fine thank you. And yours?

*Mireille Massue is on the Board of Directors and is the Virtual Web Team Leader for the PCCT Web Site. Mireille can be reached by e-mail through the PCCT Web Site <http://www.pcct.org/webteam.htm>*

*Clive Apps is leader of the PCCT Hardware SIG. The SIG meets the second Monday of every month at 7pm in St. Andrews church. Clive can be reached at (416) 510-0020 or by email [clive@problem.tantech.com](mailto:clive@problem.tantech.com)*

*Next month: Will it be Windows 98 or Windows 95 or both?*

# Quintessential CD

By Frank Latchford (PCCT)

How many times have you wished you had catalogued your music CDs? The enormity of the task when you have a couple of hundred of them is paralyzing. All that typing! It seems that it would never end.

Take heart! There is a solution to your problem. If you have an internet connection, you can download *Quintessential CD* and start cataloguing without typing anything initially. Make *Quintessential CD* your default CD player on your computer and shove in your first CD. (Before you do this log onto the Internet.) As soon as you put that first CD in the drawer and close it, the program goes to a site that contains several hundred thousand CD listings. In a fraction of the time that it takes you to read this, all of the information on the CD in your drive is transferred to *Quintessential CD* — Artist, Composer, name of composition and/or title of song on each track from the Internet site. If it doesn't have information about your disk, it instantly tells you. I put my entire collection (396 CDs) into my CD-ROM drive and it found all the information on 318 of them. I brought the entire catalogue into a text editor — it was 7,986 lines long.

How does this program work? There are a number of locations throughout the world that maintain a database of music CDs. All of this information has been uploaded by CD owners at the rate of 200 – 650 CDs a day. This database now has several hundred thousand CDs listed. If you can't find the CD information you are looking for, it is because no one has ever uploaded it to any of the sites. You are invited to fill in the information about your CD and upload it to one of these sites. This is done through the *Quintessential CD* program. This description is sent to all of the other sites and is available for the next person seeking information on that CD. You give them your e-mail address so that if you have made an error they can contact you to correct it. They do not make your e-mail address available to anyone else.

So much for how it works. How do you use it? When you put a CD into your CD drive, this program immediately looks to see if you have previously downloaded the information for it. If you have, the name of the album appears on your screen together with the track numbers in the upper right hand corner of the screen. By running the mouse pointer over these numbers you can see the name of the song or piece that is on that track. By clicking on the number, you can immediately play that track. The program contains all of the controls found on a conventional CD player program. While you are playing a CD you can miniaturize the program to one line that you can tuck on your screen anywhere you want. It displays track information. Handy if you want to know what your listening to. If you wish to make any changes to the information appearing on your screen *Quintessential CD* has a built in editor for doing so. This is definitely worth a look if you have a small or large collection of CDs. Once you get onto the site for downloading there are links to many other sites that discuss this concept.

*Quintessential CD* Shareware \$14.00  
[www.quinnware.com/qcd](http://www.quinnware.com/qcd)

Paul Quinn  
66 Flora St Apt 1 Ottawa K2P 1A8

## Techies Delight

Two Book Reviews  
by Frank Latchford (PCCT)

The firm called *Electrocution* has for a number of years published books on Hard Drive settings, BIOSes and their settings as well as a number of other technical books. This year they continue to make the book versions available but have now put the following books on one CD-ROM:

- **The BIOS Companion**
- **The Hard Disk Database**
- **Communications, Networks and Windows**
- **Motherboards!**
- **The PC User's Handbook**
- **POSTmortem Instruction Manual**

These are all in PDF format and can be read by Acrobat Reader. Phil Croucher, the author, has also put a simulation of his web site on the CD. Here you may get a description of each book and it's contents. The information is not the kind you constantly refer to, but when you need it you are probably desperate to have it. Last year in working with a hard drive all I had was the model number. With the Hard Disk Database I was able to get all of the settings for the CMOS. It worked like a charm first time. The important thing to remember about all of the information in these books is that if it exists it is probably covered in these books. It makes an incredible reference source and is all on one CD-ROM. If you are involved with any of these areas it is worth checking out.

Electrocution Technical Support Services

PO Bob 52083, Winnipeg, MB, R2M 5P9

[www.electrocution.com](http://www.electrocution.com)

Price \$35.00

## Researching Online For Dummies

In no way do I intend to disparage the book by talking about the CD-ROM that comes with it first. (This is a truly useful CD. For most books I have read that have had CDs, the CD has stayed at the back of the book). Besides two or three useful shareware programs that are helpful for doing research on the Internet, Reva Basch has included a home page that you can install on your computer. It contains all of the sites mentioned in the book and forms a permanent reference from which to work when you are searching online. I cannot over emphasize its value. If you install it and use the book in conjunction with it, your efforts will be more than rewarded. One interesting aspect is that it gives you a sense of control over your internet experience. The book gives a good explanation of the content of the CD. Take your time and familiarize yourself with it .

And now to the book. I have read a number of books on researching online. I believe this one is the best. Reva Basch stresses the discipline required to do research on the Internet, both on the free sites and the ones where you must pay to retrieve information. Her explanation of the differences between various Search Engines and when you should use each of the different types is very clear. Once you get them firmly in your own head, you will find that researching on the Net is much more effective.

Her section on planning the search before you even turn the computer on will come as a surprise to many people. Time spent planning can result in more effective researching and less time online. I read the book from cover to cover then went back and studied it and tried out many of the techniques she suggested. The difference was overwhelming. I started finding things in much less time and discovered others that I would never know existed without her help. Reva tells you not only how to look but where to look. She outlines the capabilities of many search engines and when they should be used to search for specific information. In a section of yellow pages, the author gives a description of many sites where you can obtain additional information to help you in your quest as well as to evaluate the information that you retrieve. If you are doing serious research or just want to search the Net in an intelligent non-frustrating way, you owe it to yourself to get this book, study it and use it.

*Researching Online For Dummies*

By Reva Basch

IDG Books

ISBN 0-7645-0382-0

1998 Price \$35.99



65 worth of stuff was sold on the PCCT Hardware/Software Bargoona Auction Table at the December 15 General Meeting. This raised \$6.50 for the club members.

If you have a complete system to sell, please contact Martin Moss a week before any General Meeting at:

[smarty@connection.com](mailto:smarty@connection.com) OR (416) 630-5801

# Scanners: Hints, Help & Horror Stories

by Ken Fermoyle

In my first article on scanners (Scanners Sizzle as Prices Plummet) I covered some of the basics. This one includes a synthesis of more research and hands-on experience, plus much valuable input from readers; call it Scanners 102.

One key point has emerged: scanner installation often is not a trivial matter. Most horror stories from readers, in fact, involved installation problems. (I can add one of my own.)

Scanners connect to computers either through a parallel port, or via a Small Computer System Interface (SCSI, pronounced "Scuzzy").

The parallel connection is usually used for lower end scanners because it is less expensive, usually simpler to install (though there can be complications), and doesn't require an open slot in your computer's motherboard. It has a "pass-through" connector that allows one cable to run to the printer while another plugs into the parallel port (usually LPT1) on your computer. A SCSI setup typically is four times faster than a normal parallel port connection, twice as fast as with an EPP (Enhanced Parallel Port).

Most parallel port installation problems reported came from users who already had two devices (typically a printer and Iomega or Syquest external drive) connected to the parallel port, by driver problems, or because an IEEE 1294 cable was not used with an EPP. Otherwise, there was no discernible pattern which a specific fix might resolve; each problem had to be thrashed out individually. One note of caution: If you hang several devices on a EPP and try to use a switching device to select between them, make SURE the switch is IEEE 1294-compatible. Many are not, no matter what the "sales associates" tell you.

A SCSI interface requires a special card that plugs into a slot in your computer's motherboard. The cable connecting the SCSI card and scanner may not be more than 6 feet long, and shorter is better. (I had trouble with data transfer using a 6-foot cable, while a 3-footer worked fine.) Experts tell me that the first place to look if you have trouble with any SCSI device is the cable; next, they say, check the interface card.

If you plan to daisy-chain other SCSI devices, the card that came with your scanner probably will work but you might be wise to upgrade to a better, faster SCSI card. Steve Bjork, Hardware Lab SIG leader for TUG-NET, my home User Group and editor of *E-Tech News & Review* magazine, recommends the Adaptec 2940 UW (for Ultra Wide) or something comparable.

Many readers wrote to ask about the difference between very low-priced scanners (some as low as \$79) and more expensive models. "They have the same resolution," many pointed out. All 300x600- or 600x1200-dpi (dots per inch) scanners are not created equal, however.

Light sources for lower-priced models often are fluorescent bulbs, which don't provide consistent white light for long. They also emit heat, which can distort optical components. Better scanners use cold scan technology, in which a "cold cathode" bulb serves as a cool, more consistent light source. (One of the selling points for me in the Relisys Taurus scanner I bought last fall was that it uses a Xenon glow lamp, plus its modular design that accepts extra memory.)

Corners may also be cut by using poorer quality optics (lenses, prisms) or stepper motors. We all know how quality can vary widely in magnifying glasses; you can buy some for \$1 or so, while others may run \$15 or \$20. Stepper motors move the optics and mirror assembly beneath the stationary material on the scanner's bed. The degree of precision the motors provide affects image quality. More expensive scanners may have better, low-noise circuitry and more sophisticated electronics.

In the end, if a scanner performs adequately for your purposes, that's what counts.

As to using a scanner most effectively after you buy and install it successfully, the best advice came from a reader who has become my scanner guru over the past eight months: Harry Pollison, of Spectrum Scanning Service in New Orleans (photopix@bellsouth.net). Harry has been working with scanners for more than 22 years, before most of us had even heard of scanners! He gave me advice on what to buy, then helped coach me through some installation problems (which I now think may have been caused simply by a faulty cable). Here are some rules of thumb he passed on to me.

1. Novices should experiment with and learn to use brightness and contrast controls and the highlight, midtone and shadow control.
2. You can't adjust tone much AFTER scanning; you get the greatest degree of adjustment in the PRESCANNED image.
3. Flatbed scanners always darken images and flatten out the contrast when they scan, so you should lighten the picture and increase contrast a bit.
4. Scanners tend to render an image softer than the original, so you have to sharpen the picture in whatever image editing software you use.
5. Scanners lose detail in the shadow, so you must separate as much midtone detail from the shadow end of the tonal scale as possible.

Harry recommended *Scanning The Professional Way* by Sybil & Emil Ihrig (Osborne, \$14.95) as the best book to help learn how to apply those rules of thumb — and more. I also like *Start with a Scan* by Janet Ashford & John Odan (Peachpit Press, \$34.95).

I also recommend the following Web sites as valuable resources, especially for scanning novices.

Wayne Fulton's Web site ([www.cyberramp.net/~fulton/scans](http://www.cyberramp.net/~fulton/scans)) is one of the best for useful scanner information. Among the features is a series of scans of flowers, showing exactly how different control settings produced different effects in the same scanned image.

Jeff Bone provides how-to information for novices and covers intermediate and advanced scanning issues as well at [www.infomedia.net/scan](http://www.infomedia.net/scan). You'll find the Scanning Resolution Calculator useful.

Michael Sullivan's site ([www.hsdesign.com/scanning](http://www.hsdesign.com/scanning)) offers a wealth of scanning tips & techniques, plus a scanning calculator that will help you determine dpi settings for different sizes and types of images.

The Rice University Advanced Visualization Lab offers an excellent explanation of dots per inch resolution, and how scanning and printing resolutions differ. It illustrates the explanation with a series of images scanned at varying resolutions (<http://es.rice.edu/projects/ravl/lab/scanning/resolution.html>).

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Ken Fermoyle has written some 2,500 articles for publications ranging from *Playboy* and *Popular Science* to *MacWeek*, *Microtimes* & *PC Laptop*. He was cohost/producer of a radio show on computers and a partner in a DTP service bureau during the '80s. Ken's Korner is a syndicated monthly column free to User Group newsletters. For permission to reprint this article, contact [kfermoyle@earthlink.net](mailto:kfermoyle@earthlink.net).

## ADCOM

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# Starry Nights Deluxe —

by **Dave Hanson (PCCT)**

When I first saw *Starry Nights* it was not on the Windows platform but it's first version programmed for the Mac. I must admit I was captivated by it's power and features and of course the red running shoes of this virtual telescope computer program — enabling armchair astronomy to be done without having to haul out my telescope in the dead of winter! The added bonus is that *Starry Nights* is programmed and marketed right here in Toronto by a small software company called, *Sienna Software Incorporated*.

## Installation

For me at least, installation was problematic ... the required Quicktime v.3 module simply would not install on my machine from the CD-ROM, even in safe mode. Quicktime is needed to play back 'movies' created by the user if you want to record astronomical events such as fly-bys or eclipse events in Quicktime format. Fortunately I was able to install the program on a Thinkpad laptop without any difficulties. I suspect the Quicktime problem is related to a previous version of the Apple QT player that was already installed on my machine.

## Functions and Features

For those not familiar with astronomy 'planetarium-type' programs this rates as one of the best for amateur astronomers. *Starry Nights Deluxe* allows the user to display the day or night-time sky, not only from any location on or around the earth, but from anywhere in the solar system and beyond. The sky is presented to you in 'real time' but can also be fast forwarded or backed up minutes, hours or even centuries to simulate astronomical events at any time during history (or the future).

*Starry Nights Deluxe* will install a 'star catalogue' up to a certain star brightness on your hard drive. However if you leave the SND CD-ROM in your player it will refer to a much larger catalogue listing enabling you to view fainter and fainter stars.

Especially interesting is the ability to display multiple windows or views of a particular 'event' from multiple locations in real time ... for instance being able to view a total solar eclipse from the path of totality, from the moon (looking towards the earth) and also from the sun itself. Other features include the plotting

of orbits and inputting of new astronomical orbit data. Double clicking on a particular object will give the user additional information about same.

There is a whole host of options and customizations available, one of which is the darkness of the sky (e.g. light pollution). Other options include field of view, location of viewer and many, many others.

Custom star charts can also be printed (black stars) on a white background, with names and labelling.

## Documentation

Documentation comes in a couple of different forms. The printed 'Getting Started' guide was very useful, however I found it more useful after playing around with the program for an hour or two. The install program will copy the *Starry Night* manual to your hard drive (in HTML format) and if you have an Internet connection the most current version of the manual can be downloaded from the Sienna Software WEB site.

## Online component

There is an extensive online component to *Starry Nights Deluxe* as well, however I was not able to use this feature because I did not have an Internet link on my laptop. *Starry Nights* has something called the 'Livesky' which allows users (if connected to the Internet) to link to various sites for additional star catalogue information together with links to other astronomy related sites! Of course Sienna is online as well and can be contacted at URL: [www.siennasoft.com](http://www.siennasoft.com)

## Summary

Once installed *Starry Nights* is a very powerful program allowing new and experienced amateur astronomers to simulate the night and day sky from any perspective. Although it can be used as a planetarium type program it is capable of much more, such as planet and astronomical body 'fly-bys'.

## System requirements

Windows 95, NT 4 or above (will not run on Win 3.1) with 16 MBs of RAM and 15 – 60 MBs of hard drive space (dependant on installation options) SVGA 256 colour-compatible monitor and a CD-ROM drive

*Mac users will need a 68040 or PowerPC or better, System 7.0 8 MBs RAM and 10 – 40 MBs HD space*

# Kash As Kash Can

## The Little Key That Could: Shortcuts involving the Windows key

So without further ado, press:

**Windows E to open Windows Explorer,**

**Windows F to open Find,**

**Windows M, to minimize all open windows (or Shift + Windows + M to undo this command)**

**Windows R, to open the Run window,**

**Windows F1 to open Help,**

**Windows Tab, to cycle through the Taskbar buttons,**

**Windows Break, to open the System Properties dialog box**

Note: Some keyboards have a Windows key, and some don't. If yours doesn't, you can create one using the Keyboard Remap Kernel Toy. Point your browser to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/downloads/contents/powertoys/w95keybdremap/default.asp>

and click the Windows 95 Keyboard Remap link. Once you've downloaded and installed this utility, open the Control Panel, double-click Keyboard and select the Remap tab. Under Right-Hand Side, select the key you want to transform — such as Right Alt — in the left-hand box. Then, in the right-hand box, select Windows. Click OK, and your Right Alt key now functions as a Windows key.

# INFO LINE!



Find out what is going on at the PCCT each week by calling the club hotline at **(416) 633-6971** for the latest news on meetings.

The new message is changed on Sunday for the following week. Check for last minute changes.

If there is a last minute cancellation of a SIG meeting, the message should be on our phone line or BBS.

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## Microsoft Encarta Reference Suite 99

# More Fun Than Trivial Pursuit

By Joan Latchford (PCCT)

When we were growing up, my sister and I were ardent readers. Over meals we would engage in furious discussion over minor points of general knowledge. These were frequently resolved by seizing a dictionary or a volume of *The Book of Knowledge*, *Journeys Through Bookland*, or *The World Book*.

Today, though we still have our 30 volume set of *Britannica*, the pace of history is so accelerated that a person cannot be sure that any writing of a scientific or political nature is still valid. The other day, I read that neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield's anatomical map of the brain was not only printed upside down in all the books used by medical students over the last decades but that he, himself, had got it wrong. *Map of brain is upside down, researcher says, Toronto Star, 29/12/98.*

Which brings me to *Microsoft Encarta Reference Suite*. I have had this software on hand for a month or so but it wasn't until I got into a discussion with my husband over the recent hostage taking in Yemen that I was prompted to try it out.

### Encyclopedia

The Suite comes on five CD-ROMs, the Installation and Resources disk (dark blue), the Encyclopedia on red disks 1 and 2, Virtual Globe (lettuce green) and Bookshelf, (deep yellow) on singles. It is also available on one DVD disk.

After installation (uneventful), I put in the first Encyclopedia disk, typed "Yemen" in the "Find" box and was immediately presented with a short list, which included:

- Yemen – People's Republic of,
- Yemen Arab Republic
- Yemen Pipeline
- Yemeni Flag and Anthem
- Yemeni Folk Dancers

In a matter of seconds, it went on to list the titles of all the other articles in the Encyclopedia which included the word "Yemen," and provided additional articles on related topics, such as Islamic Fundamentalism, gave several .wav files of Yemeni music and photos of emerald terraced mountain fields, traditional architecture, and a Yemeni couple preparing their evening meal.

As if that was not enough, a note popped up telling me that there was updated information to download from the Internet — and presented a "clickable" URL to do so. This whisked me, via the Encarta News Search link, to News Wires with ten or more back articles on the hostage event which had sparked my interest in Yemen in the first place.

### Encarta Virtual Globe:

Still following up my the topic of Yemen, I put in the disk for the *Virtual Globe*. The initial view is a bread 'n butter-plate size global image of the world. To the left of the screen is a menu that invites you to select a map style such as: statistical, political, ecco-regions, climate, physical features, time zones and more.

Along the bottom of your screen there are several icons, including a hand. Click on it, and with your left mouse button held down you can drag and rotate the globe in any direction you want. If you choose the dotted rectangle cursor you can place it over a map area you want to examine more closely. A right click gives you the choice to print, copy, zoom in and zoom out. It is possible to zoom from the world map, to North America, to Canada, Ontario, to a detailed map of Toronto showing the area where you live. You can have your place titles in normal, large or with no labels. The cursor shaped like a target gives the latitude and longitude of any spot it is resting on. One feature mentioned in "help" is still not working — I have not yet been able to pass my cursor over a place name on a map to hear it pronounced.

Of course, not all cities and countries are shown with the same amount of detail but when I was looking at the map of the U.K. my husband said "Show me where you used to live in England". Realizing I had forgotten where it was on the map I typed in "Northiam". To my surprise Encarta brought up a map with "Northiam," (a tiny village), highlighted by a special white label. When I gave the "print" command, a dialogue asked if I wanted the map to be titled. I clicked OK. The

map printed out on the Epson Stylus Photo EX rivaled a National Geographic map for quality — and it was titled *Northiam, East Sussex* in block caps at the bottom. On the other hand, according to legend, the map symbol for urban population density places Toronto in the 500,000 – 999,999 category.

### Bookshelf

I left the exploration of Bookshelf to the last, because I felt this would be the most intuitive part of Encarta and the one I was looking forward to having at my finger tips. Up to this point, my discoveries had been spontaneous and I had not needed to refer to "help" once. Not so with Bookshelf, which put a tiny icon of a book in the tray area of my screen. According to "help," if I selected a word in a Microsoft program such as Word, right clicked on the book icon, it would bring up choices of *quick quote*, *quick synonym*, *quick define*, and *find all books* — then open the appropriate reference work with my search word shown in the question box. In my case it brought up the menu, opened up Bookshelf but I had to type the chosen word into the "find" box manually.

There were a couple of suspected causes for this failure to perform. Clicking on Word's "Tools" menu did give me the choice of "Look up reference" and when I clicked on Microsoft Bookshelf Basics, I got a cryptic error message "Cannot execute F:\aamsstp\app\bs96se.exe". BS indeed! It's a small point and I suspect this problem is caused by a leftover file from Bookshelf 96. At any rate, removing and reinstalling *ENCARTA Reference Suite 99* corrected it. Now all the right menu options pop up over my opened document as they should — even in Adobe Pagemaker 6.5. During final edit I was able to use this pop-up feature to verify 'videoconferencing' is indeed one word.

Besides definitions, synonyms and audio pronunciations, Bookshelf offers searchable quotations, a style guide (including rules for civil e-mail communications — a welcome addition for any who have been flamed for ill-advised humour) and a time-line. It is interesting to look up Sylvia Plath, for instance, to see all the other familiar writers who had books out in the same year. Entering "Donavan Bailey" brought up all the major sports events of 1996 including Evander Holyfield's defeat of Mike Tyson in November. Don't know how to spell someone's name? Time-line, and I suspect other features, accept the asterisk as a wildcard.

Encarta Reference Suite is a magnificent tool for acquiring general and specific knowledge. At first it seems strange to access your reference sources by typing search terms into a common dialogue box instead of opening graphic representations of individual books. It is even more unsettling to realise that when you choose "All Books," your search topic information from the different reference works is presented to you in concatenated fashion.

Encarta will even let you use natural language — for instance, when I typed in "What do kidneys weigh?" it not only brought up an illustrated article with the appropriate passage highlighted, it took me online to grab another one on *What Kids Need to Know About Kidneys*.

My exploration of the Encarta Reference Suite has been over a two day period. I have enjoyed every moment. Can't wait to get a DVD drive so that I can relish it even more without the interruption of swapping disks.

Microsoft Encarta Reference Suite 99  
List \$159 Canadian

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### Intel: concluded from front page.

PCCT members and guests will be treated to an informative talk by Victor Bapat, IT Architecture Manager for Intel Canada Ltd., on it's current product line. The Pentium® Pentium II Xeon®, and Intel Celeron® CPU's. As well, attendees will get a glimpse of what's to come with the introduction of the new "Katmai" (code-name only) processor to be introduced in the first quarter of 1999. The latter to be used in desktop, mobile, server and workstation segments for the next year to 18 months.

Come and see what Intel is doing in video including updates on consumer-oriented technology such as video phone, AnyPoint™ technology, the Connected Car™ PC, etc. Finally PCCT members will also be filled in on Intel's Internet devices.

It's been a while since we've had Intel as a speaker so you'll not want to miss this important technology update from this industry leader.

IN FEBRUARY — yup, it's tax time and that means income tax software. This year the folks from CANTAX return from western Canada to give PCCT members a look at the next version of their consumer tax preparation software.

# PCCT Family Membership Application Form



**SEND TO**  
**PCCT**  
**The Personal Computer Club of Toronto**  
**Membership Director**  
**P.O. Box 5429, Station A,**  
**Toronto, Ontario,**  
**Canada M5W 1N6**

Annual Family Membership Fees:  
 \$65/year (per household)

Fax/Voice: (416) 633-6971  
 BBS: (416) 636-6394

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt/Suite: \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Profession: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque enclosed:  Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **I WANT MORE INFO:**   
 VISA  VISA Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you pick up this copy of read.me? \_\_\_\_\_

## PCCT Family Membership Benefits

**With your family membership you get:**

- Expert help from knowledgeable computer users;
- Special deals on Internet service, software and hardware;
- A monthly draw and an auction for great products;
- Demonstrations by leading software and hardware companies;
- 11 monthly Special Interest Groups (SIG) meetings;
- Access to a software library with the best of shareware and freeware programs; communications software;
- Access to the club BBS (for a one-time set up fee of \$20);
- Monthly issues of the club newsletter you're holding right now!

### FREE ADMISSION . . . the night is on us !!!

**SAVE:** \$5 with this coupon at a PCCT general meeting.  
**WHERE:** North York Memorial Centre, 5110 Yonge Street, one floor below the Central Library.  
**TIME:** 7 p.m.  
**WHEN:** Third Tuesday of the month. see the calendar below.

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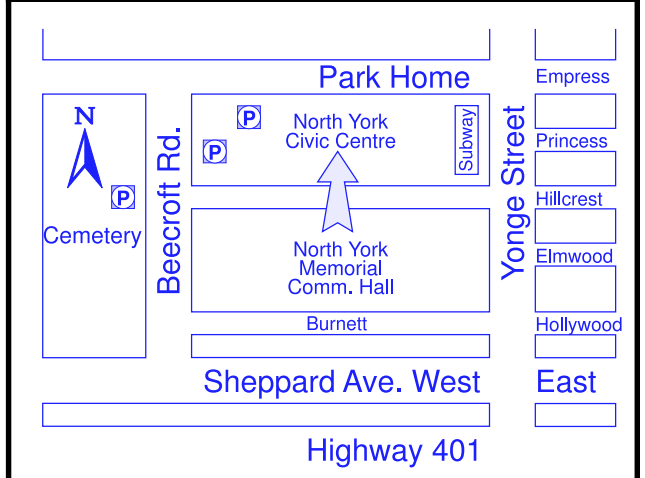
### ADMIT ONE



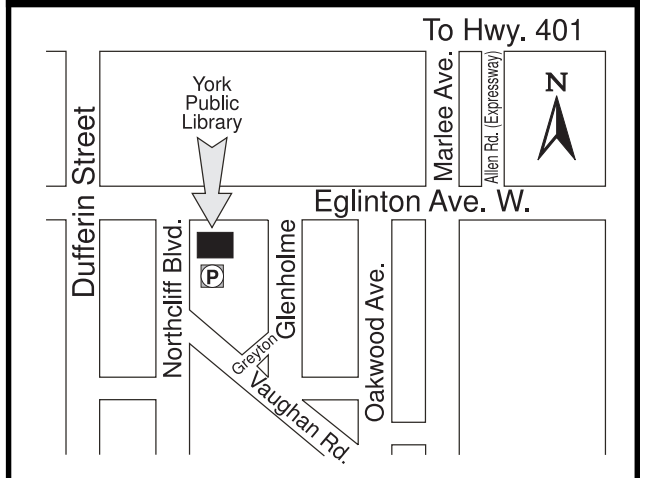
# Calendar of Events

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	
<b>JANUARY 99</b>		<b>5</b> <b>Windows SIG</b> YPL at 7:30 pm	<b>6</b> <b>Investment SIG</b> YPL at 7:00 pm	<b>7</b> <b>The Basics SIG</b> YPL at 7:00 pm	Dear SIG Leaders:  If you have a special announcement you would like put in this space, please e-mail it to me at:  joanie@the-wire.com or Fax it to: (416)340-1104
	<b>10</b> <b>Hardware SIG</b> St. A. at 7:00 pm	<b>11</b> <b>Daytime SIG</b> St. A at 1:00 pm	<b>12</b> <b>Digital Imaging</b> YPL at 7:30 pm	<b>13</b> <b>Visual Basic</b> YPL at 7:00pm	
	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <b>General Meeting</b> NYC at 7:00 p.m	<b>19</b> <b>New User SIG</b> YPL at 7:30pm	<b>20</b> <b>MS Office SIG</b> YPL at 7:00pm	
	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Daytime SIG</b> St. A at 1:00pm <b>Internet SIG</b> YPL at 7:30 p.m.	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Genealogy SIG</b> YPL at 7:30pm	

## NYC North York Memorial Comm. Hall, 5110 Yonge St.



## YPL York Public Library 1745 Eglinton Ave., West



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	
<b>FEBRUARY 99</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Windows SIG</b> YPL at 7:30 pm	<b>3</b> <b>Investment SIG</b> YPL at 7:00 pm	<b>4</b> <b>The WIN Basics SIG</b> YPL at 7:00 pm	The Editor needs your articles, reviews and tips.  We try, as far as possible, to publish material by our club members.  Some of us tried writing, found we liked it and have gone on to write for other publications. You might be the next.  If there is a particular book or product you would like to review we will see if we can get a copy for you.  Preference will be given to door prize winners who have handed in the obligatory review. J.L.
	<b>8</b> <b>Hardware SIG</b> St. A. at 7:00 pm	<b>9</b> <b>Daytime SIG</b> St. A. at 1:00 pm	<b>10</b> <b>Digital Imaging SIG</b> YPL at 7:30 pm	<b>11</b> <b>Visual Basic SIG</b> YPL at 7:00 pm	
	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <b>General Meeting</b> NYC at 7:00 pm	<b>17</b> <b>New User SIG</b> YPL at 7:30 pm	<b>18</b> <b>MS Office SIG</b> YPL at 7:00 pm	
	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <b>Daytime SIG</b> St. A. at 1:00 pm <b>Internet SIG</b> YPL at 7:30 pm	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <b>Genealogy SIG</b> YPL at 7:30 pm	

## St. A Church of St. Andrew 2333 Victoria Park Ave.

