

Review of June's general meeting

Wizards, assistants, and navigators remove intimidation from databases

by Susan Phillips

“Average users don't use databases, they use a spreadsheet ... only experts and masochists use databases ... it's easier to make your spreadsheet do the task (an inventory of your CDs, or whatever), than to learn the database command structure needed to do all the work you have to do before you can even start to input data ... and then you have know the language to sort the data and to get a report printed ... if you use a special purpose application for any length of time, such as CD-LIST, you come to see its limitations, but you still don't want to have to learn to program just to keep an inventory or store a bibliography...”

These were the kind of comments going into the June meeting held in the spacious Kanata Community Christian Reformed Church. But the good news from all presenters was that databases are no longer intimidating, and there is no need to learn a specific language or set of formulas to design and use a database. The four products they demonstrated allow you to use plain language to set up and use your database. None of them require you to write in code or learn a special query language.

The presenters at June's meeting, in order of appearance, were: Andrew Ross MacNeill, who demonstrated Foxpro 2.6 from Microsoft; Martin Lyne and Terry Ferguson from DataEase International, who showed us Express for Windows v.1.1; Kim Adams, Lotus Product Manager for Canada, who presented Approach 3.0; and the energetic Steve Finner ran us through Borland's dBase for Windows.

There was no possible way the presenters could cover all the features of their products in the short time allowed but they tried valiantly to do so, despite the efforts of the sun to ob-

scure the projection screen. All presenters had previously been given a diskette containing the database structure: five inter-related databases with five types of fields. At the meeting they were given the data for those databases.

FoxPro 2.6

Drawing the shortest straw, Andrew Ross MacNeill started the evening off with FoxPro 2.6. This program launches into the Catalog Manager, which controls all your database files through a single screen, set in the familiar Microsoft format.

FoxPro 2.6 lets you join tables, and you can filter the data in a query report by fields that are outside of your report. All queries are dynamic and are updated when the query is run.

The main enhancements to FoxPro are the ten Wizards, Microsoft's alternative to the standard FoxPro tools. Wizards lead you through a series of simple, but pointed questions, making suggestions and showing examples. Wizards are used to make tasks such as defining a table, or building a query, generating a report, or mail-merging, simpler.

For example, to set up your database interface, you can use the Screen Builder function, or use the Screen Wizard. Your responses to the Wizard produce your screen layout, which is being generated, invisibly, in FoxPro code. The Mail-merge Wizard links you to Word, WordPerfect, or other word processors. You simply pick the document type that you want your data to merge with and FoxPro launches the word processing program and opens the document. If you want addresses from your FoxPro database merged with your letter in Word, the Mail-merge Wizard will insert the merge codes and logic into the Word document, then Word makes the link with the joined database tables.

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Express for Windows v.1.1

DataEase International was up next. Martin Lyne and Theresa (Terry) Ferguson demonstrated how it allows you to handle data created in other database format, without having to learn that other program. Express can link with Paradox, Oracle, dBase IV etc, without importing or conversions.

Express comes with sample styles sheets and templates, and a customizable Toolbar. You can also customize your field layout by adding "action" buttons (to perform often-repeated, or custom-defined functions with a click) to your table. Express enables you to define multiple forms for your data in a single underlying table, and you can view and update multiple files from the same screen. Since everything on the screen is an object, you can click on it to see its characteristics, or to change its definition, display, font, or whatever. You can insert images into your work, dragging them from the clip art directory.

Express can provide seven levels of security at which you can block access to your data, for example, you can set up to allow user to only view data, to be able to modify only certain fields, or to modify but not delete records or fields.

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Wizards *continued from front page*

Express gives you the choice of "Query By Form" or "Query By Model" which not only creates reports without you having to use query language, but it also allows you to see how your files are related.

You will still need your manual to translate some of the terms, e.g.: sequenced ID, predefined function, validation, but there is on-line help.

Approach 3.0

Kim Adams presented Approach 3.0, Lotus' solution to creating databases from scratch: no programming, just point and click. Approach has a very clean-looking, easy to use, (easy as 1, 2, 3?) tabbed interface, and if you run your mouse along the tool bar, little speech balloons appear to tell you what the icons stand for.

Double-clicking on a field gives you an information box with a tabbed interface that shows for that field, definitions and structures such as validation options, type of field, and fonts you can use. Approach lets you create drop-down lists in a field, for example to select the name of a province from a list.

Approach can open other formats such as dBase, and FoxPro, as well as Lotus 1-2-3 directly, or you can choose from a number of available templates. Approach can add data in fields in different databases by clicking on one field after another and then pointing where the sum is to go. No need to write formulae. With Approach you can join up to 55 database tables and up to 255 SQL tables.

Reports in Approach can be done using the Report Assistant, and by clicking and pointing you can add visuals such as maps to your screen. Since Approach is part of the Lotus SmartSuite, it can use the spell checker common to the Suite.

dBase for Windows

By talking a mile-a-minute and squeezing some of his words sideways, the always-entertaining Borland's Steve Finer sped through the beta version of dBase for Windows, punctuating his words by throwing t-shirts to the lions, I mean listeners. Steve's opening argument was that if a product is merely a visual tool it will eventually lack something. Borland's dBase 5.0 uses full object-oriented technology to create graphical development tools with which you can design forms, build queries, and so on, without writing any code. But dBase

also allows you to access and edit the underlying source code if you wish.

The dBase two-way interface allows you to see an object (for example, the window in which you are designing the layout of your record), and its source code (in a program editor window), simultaneously. You can change the code in one window and then go back to the other window and change a design feature and both will be effective.

To customize your tool bar or command buttons you have to use text from menu lists, but dBase 5.0 has over 100 bitmap icons to go on the buttons.

You work from the Navigator which gives you your choices of areas of work, but dBase can still access the dot prompt if that's your choice. It's compatible with the DOS version and you can run DOS-based dBase III+ and IV functions in the Windows environment.

One neat thing about dBase 5.0 is that when you are linking data fields to set up a query, you can literally tie them together. You open all the windows containing your records, align them so you can see them, then draw a line from one field to another or to a number of fields. You can actually see the relationships.

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Internet news

Internet toolbox

by Jerry Gault

Imagine travelling a foreign highway without a road map, getting hopelessly lost and bewildered. The lack of Net structure has caused us all a headache or two. Many club members have joined millions of people around the world on the Net. All of us thrown into such a large arena without a guidebook is bound to create how do I do this-, and where do I find that-type questions. Hopefully the following information will help guide you through your Net travels, or at least point you to sources of information that may be of some use.

Free references

It is helpful to have a few select resources available in front of you as you surf the Net. The following are common documents available by ftp, gopher, etc on the Net.

- Scott Yanoff's **Special Internet Connections**: It's available by anonymous ftp to [csd4.csd.uwm.edu/pub/inet/services.txt](ftp://csd4.csd.uwm.edu/pub/inet/services.txt), or finger yanoff@csd4.csd.uwm.edu. Yanoff's guide, which is updated regularly,

lists Internet resources by subject, giving site information and popular new user archive ftp sites.

- **December's guide**, from J. December, Information Sources: Also known as The Internet and Computer-Mediated Communications guide, it is another good source of information. It lists discussion groups, hundreds of files and other resources available on the Net.
- **Big fun in the Internet with Uncle Bert**, is a 15-page list of world ftp and telnet sites that contain information from a to z.
- A couple of popular Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) documents can be found on newsgroups <comp.protocols.tcp-ip.ibmpc> and <alt.winsock>. Or you can download these from <ftp://ftp.cac.psu.edu/pub/dos/info/tcpip.packages> and <ftp://ftp.sunsite.unc.edu/pub/micro/pc-stuff/ms-windows/winsock/FAQ>. These FAQ's answer questions of the 'how to' and 'what is' variety.

Reference books

Some handy reference books to have on your desk are:

- **The Internet Complete Reference** by Harley Hahn and Rick Stout is invaluable, and is the most used book in my library. This book discusses all the popular tools of the Net, as well as providing a good catalog.
- **Canadian Internet Handbook** by Jim Carroll and Rick Broadhead. This book is planned to be published yearly and focuses on the Canadian side of the Net.
- **The Whole Internet & Users Guide**, 2nd Edition by Ed Kroll, is touted as the most popular Internet-related book and is hard to do without. The author discusses all of the Net tools including Mosaic, and a catalog of well-known Net sites rounds off his book.
- **TCP/IP-Architecture, Protocols, and Implementation**: For those of you interested in the technical side of TCP/IP I recommend this book by Sidnie Feit.

This is just a short list of reference material handy for your Net travels.

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Intel, do tell

by Julie Dustin

Appearing at the OPCUG meeting on Tuesday, August 30, will be representatives from Intel. Jon Coxworth, architecture manager for Eastern Canada, along with Rich Heslip, an Intel field application engineer, and Andre Beauchamp, ProShare specialist, will be presenting us with Intel's market visions covering the Pentium and P6 as well as information on new products. These products include "plug-and-play" technology and ProShare personal conferencing software.

Pentium projections

According to Coxworth, the movement to Pentium-based systems will increase over the next few years for both home and office systems. "Over 300,000 Pentium-based units were shipped in 1993 and we see that number increasing to at least 7 million in the next year. That projection is based on the over-200 OEM companies worldwide building Pentium-based motherboards and systems, and then adding the thousands of system integrators using those boards to assemble PCs," he notes.

The Pentium chip is available now in four speeds (60, 66, 90, and 100 MHz) and will be capable of 150 MHz by next year. Coxworth says, "The speed along with the reduced power consumption from 12 watts to 4 watts gives you a powerful chip."

Now you're probably wondering about the P6 chip. According to Coxworth, "We plan to ship the next-generation P6 chip next year and it will be 2 - 3 times as powerful as the P5 and handle 500 transactions/second. Be assured that it will be binary-compatible with the P5 and previous generation Intel chips". Yes, OPCUG members, we all know that means a new motherboard design.

Plug and play

Plug and play technology is the result of a joint venture between the Intel Architecture Lab (IAL) and their industry partners to develop easier ways of adding boards to PCs. "We are working with the BIOS and board vendors to make the hardware (motherboard and cards) responsible for setting I/O, IRQ, and DMA channel settings without conflicts," advises Coxworth. According to their literature, new PCMCIA cards have this technology and can be inserted or removed without powering down the system. Let's hope they can deliver on their promise to make the installation process easier for all the currently existing ISA and EISA cards as well.

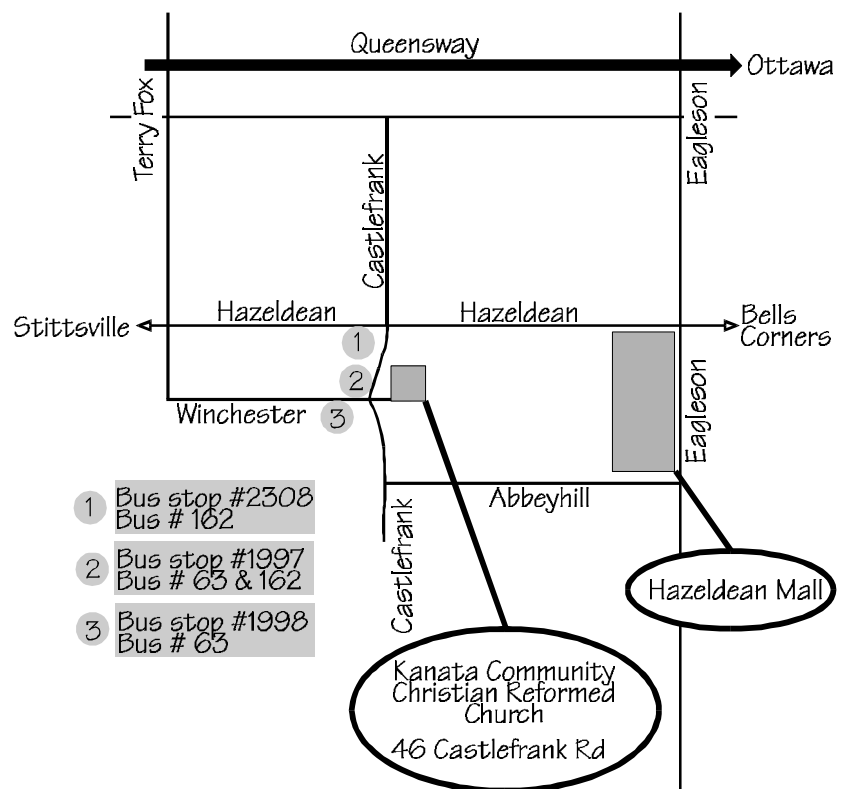
Calendar (subject to change)

August Meeting Location: Kanata Community Christian Reformed Church
46 Castlefrank Rd, Kanata

General Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Date	Topic
Tuesday, 30 August	See this page
September date to be announced	To be announced

KANATA



ProShare

"ProShare personal conferencing software allows one-on-one communications that, for example, could be used by two people performing a simultaneous edit on a document," says Coxworth. ProShare Premier, a Windows-based application provides application or document sharing (for drawings, presentations, designs, programming) and lists for \$300 (U.S.). It requires either a modem or a network connection. ProShare 200 includes Premier's features and adds video conferencing capabilities over an ISDN line. The kit lists for \$2,495 (U.S.) and includes 2 cards, camera, microphone, and ear jacks. This sounds like a great tool for the Advisory Council on the Information Highway so they don't have to spend money going across the country.

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Ottawa PC News

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPUG), and is published monthly except in June and July. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members.

Deadline

Deadline for submissions is the last day of the month prior to publication.

Mailing Address

3 Thatcher St., Nepean, Ontario, K2G 1S6
Telephone answering machine 723-1329

Bulletin board—the PUB (BBS)

Up to 14.4 kbps v.32bis 228-0665 (6 lines)

Chairman

Harald Freise 828-3411

Past Chairman

Doug Poulter 745-8768

Treasurer

Tony Frith 995-4727

Secretary

To be announced

Membership Chairman

Mark Cayer 224-8031

Convenor

Jack Stekelenburg 838-5985

Software Librarian

Norman Dafoe 723-1909

BBS Sysop

Chris Taylor 723-1329

Hardware/Software Broker

No appointment

Newsletter Editor

Chris Seal 831-0280

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Julie Dustin 823-1552
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Beginners' Corner

Eric Clyde 749-2387

DTP SIG coordinator

Paul Svetkoff 733-5177

Fox SIG coordinator

Andrew Ross MacNeill (voice/fax) 596-3313

Internet SIG coordinator

To be announced

Paradox SIG coordinator

Larry Chop 236-8761 (days)

Windows SIG coordinator

Philip Baker 247-9555

Group Meetings

OPUG meets monthly except in June and July. Check the answering machine, the PUB and the newsletter for the date and place. Meeting times are 7:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Membership fees

\$25 per year

Disk-of-the-Month

\$25 for 5.25 in. diskettes and \$35 per year for 3.5 in. (for 10 diskettes)

Ottawa Paradox User's Group (OPUG)

by Larry Chop

The next meeting of the Ottawa Paradox User's Group (OPUG) will be on Wed., September 7, 1994 at INLY's store, 1221A Cyrville road, Gloucester. Please note the new location and that this is the FIRST Wednesday of the month.

The following topics are on the agenda:

- "To err is human, to really foul things up requires a computer." Technical Discussion on debugging and tracing in Paradox 4.5 and 5 by Larry Chop.
- Borland News: Steve Finner will cover what's out, what's new, and what's different with Borland Paradox related products. Focus will be on Paradox 5.0.
- Break: New members and attendance sheet; OPUG Magazine Library; Coffee (open bar so bring change—40 cents)

- The continuing saga of a case study in developing a Paradox for Windows application by Rick Morrison.
- TTT's (Tips Tricks and Techniques): Open forum discussion/questions/etc. on Paradox 3.5, Paradox 4.0 and/or Paradox for Windows. Any new books on Paradox or other sources?
- Future meeting topics:
 - Multi-window applications—Nick Potter
 - ODAPI/IDAPI—Steve Finner
 - Paradox 5.0—new stuff?
 - Table-driven menus—Nick Potter (based on Informant article)
 - Demo of an application—anybody willing?
 - Any other preferences—any volunteers?
- Post meeting: Inly's will be open until 9:30 for your browsing and purchasing pleasure.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

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Other resources are available for specific topics that may be of interest to you.

Visit the SIG's message area on the Pub. Its a great place to ask questions and discuss current issues. Happy netting.

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