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>>>> NFOs, software piracy and <<<<
>>>> ASCII pinups <<<<

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>> NFO is short for information and is now the term used when talking about the token text file that warez groups include within their releases. Originally these text files only contained information about the crack included within the release. But as time progressed more details where included such as short information about the game or application, keyboard commands and credits to the persons involved in bring the release to the public. Eventually these text files became more formalised and were included as standard issue in every release a group would put out. <<

<Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam, 2002>

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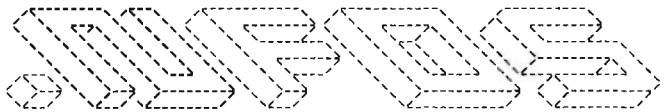

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In the same way, the author of this booklet takes no responsibility on the use of any information contained within the collected texts. All the texts were downloaded from the Internet.

Compiled and designed by André Avelãs for the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam. The typeface used is Lucida Console as it was, at least in the author's case, the default type on Microsoft's standard text program, Notepad, used usualy to see the collected texts on screen.

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Texts:	NFOS:
A History of the Scene, by Ipggi, 1999	THG Intro Maker 1.0, THG Application to be bonded into Slavery, EOF Atlantis logo Adobe Photoshop CD-RIP, WWR
A bit of History, by Stephen Poole	Late night TV Sexy Show, T[+]B Caesars Palace 2000, ? Southpark, PARADIGM MS Office Developers Kit, RIGID King's Quest VI Crack, RAZOR 1911 TDT are Lamers, RAZOR 1911
Interview with Sandor/Radium, by Spyros, 1998	Cubase VST24 3.650, RADIUM Sonic Foundry ACID 1.0a, RADIUM
Interview with Yazz/Radium, by Spyros, 1998	Cubase VST 3.553, RADIUM
Interview with DeepzOn3/Radium, by Spyros, 1998	Logic Audio 3.0.16, RADIUM
Software Piracy: An Alternative view, by Jim Thomas and Gordon Meyer, 1990	TaskTimer for Windowa 1, ANOXIA Mariah Carey Screen Savers, TOOD
The Effects of Piracy, by Marvin Boyd, 1997	Chessmaster 4000, RAZOR 1911 Commodore 64 Pack, RAZOR 1911
Warez Wars, by David McCandless, 1997	QuarkXpress 4.03, X-FORCE Macromedia Flash 5.0, ODDITY Form Flow 1.1, INNER CIRCLE Form-Z 3.5, HARVEST Novell Multiprotocol Router, TGA Energizer Bunny Screen Saver, TZU Adobe Photoshop 6.0, SHOCK 3D Studio Max 3.0, DOD

ASCII Pinups + Duchamp

Angela	Batgirl
Betty	Bunny
Cindy	Clohe
Deborah	?
Fran	Kathy
Kelly	?
?	Roxanne
?	?

A HISTORY OF THE SCENE

Written by Ipggi (April 20, 1999)

A Product of http://www.defacto2.net

INTRODUCTION

Ever since there has been the ability to store data on a personal computer and commercial software for sale, there has been the existence of pirating. Pirating, cracking and even pirate scenes go all the way back to the late seventies, and maybe even earlier. By the early eighties some machines (such as the BBC Macro in Europe) where so riddled with pirates that the programming companies gave up. They discontinued producing and porting software for the affected computers because there was simply no money to be made.

This report is designed with the PC scene in mind.

WHEN DID THE PC SCENE BEGIN?

Of all the many 8bit computers and scenes of the early eighties (the golden age?) most people will agree that the Commodore 64 was the biggest of them all. The Commodore 64 scene started back in 1982 (mainly by a lot of young teenagers). While the PC was released earlier to the public it would be the Commodore 64's pirate scene which would introduce many of the standards that today we take as granted. During this time on the PC there were some small groups with people releasing and cracking, but these cracked programs usually remained local. The international PC scene did not take off until 1987. This was when people started to trade software with cracks over longer distances and overseas which formed the basis of the now old school BBS scene.

EARLY NFOS AND CRACKTROS

Unfortunately for us the eighties PC scene is one of the lesser known and least documented. Due to the limitations of the PC at the time, cracktros where extremely rare (unlike the Commodore 64, Amiga or Atari ST) and text files to document the releases were usually never created.

In the eighties many cracks where usually created by individuals rather then groups (groups being a collection of people who work under the same name). These individuals would normally leave a signature in the release to identify themselves as the cracker. For example, on a game's title screen you might see in the bottom corner "cracked by Lord Blix". By the end of the eighties it was the groups who where cracking releases rather then just individuals. And with groups being a more prestigious lot they would sometimes insert a custom title screen designed especially for that release (simular to today's installers). Bentley Sidewell Productions, a famous cracking group of the late eighties would usually use a CGA picture or animation to show that they cracked the title. While International Network of Crackers would use a less captivating ANSI graphic.

It's worth noting that Bentley Sidewell Productions animations were probably the first cracktros and intros for the PC. So technically the origins of the PC demo scene goes back to the old PC cracking scene.

It was the hacking groups of the eighties that first started to use acronyms to encrypt their names. This was often used to confuse unwanted people from differentiating the different hacking groups but it's main benefit was the addreviated typing. Typing abbreviations is a lot easier then typing the complete group name. But the standard three letter acronym was not really considered standard until the PC's emergence in the early nineties (groups on other computers had up to five or six letter acronyms). This was due to DOS's limited file naming capability of only being able to handle eleven characters (eight . three) per file.

When crackers wanted to add last minute notes or information about their cracks they would include a small text file into the release. Eventually groups started adding regular text files to their releases. Information in these files would usually state a note from the cracker, some information on how to play the game (keyboard keys etc) and maybe a member listing or some BBS numbers.

It was about this time that the groups started to implement a set naming format to these text files. This format use an eight letter abbreviated form of the program title followed by .DOC (short for document). Other groups decided to replace the .DOC acronym with one based on their groups name for example SIMCITY.CIA, SIMCITY.INC or SIMCITY.PTL. Hence the standard group three letter acronym was formed.

To the best of knowledge The Humble Guys in 1990 introduced the now standard .NFO acronym. One assumes NFO was created to be the three letter acronym for the word information or info. The initial format was the standard eight letter game title abbreviation followed by .NFO before it eventually evolved the now current standard of GROUP.NFO

-=-=-=

THG Intro Maker 1.0
From THG! (Sauron)

Packaged: Fabulous Furlough
Supplier: Sauron
Graphics: VGA Only (320X200 - 256 color)
Controls: Keyboard

Notes: Here is our donation to the pirating world for those groups that are TOOOO lame to make their own intros.. All you have to do is type the scroll text into an ASCII file, and supply a 320 X 200 X 256 color gif file & it will make the intro for you..

Greets: Sauron - Thanks for the Great Job & your Patience
The Humble Couriers - Descent Job for a 7.5 meg game
Neil - Another Great title for us, another disappointment for you.

The Humble Guys are:

The Candyman, Fabulous Furlough, NightWriter, The Slavelord, Predator, Mr. Plato, Fletcher Christian, Lord Blix, Barimor, The Viper, BamBam, Lord Zombie, The Guch, Eddie Haskel, Funakoshi, Wico, The Humble Sysop Drool Master Rick, JROK, Mr.M, Mace Mandella, Belgarion, The Humble Babe, Harry Lime, Black Plague, Lord Sterling, Sauron, and our HUMBLE leader, Gods Gift to the IBM !

Our Humble Couriers:

Blood Reviver, Lord Exterminator, Heavy Metal, High Roller, Skoal Bandit, The Mogur, Con Artist

The Humble Boards

Members	Candyland	(***) ***-****	Droolmaster Rick
	The Slave Den	(904) 331-1038	The Slavelord
	HMS Bounty (2 nodes)	(215) 873-7287	Fletch
	The Humble Review	(319) 372-5987	The Humble Sysop
	Plato's Place (3 nodes)	(618) 254-5263	Mr. Plato
	Iron Fortress	(508) 798-5492	Predator
	SpamLand (2 nodes)	(508) 831-0131	Eddie Haskel
Boards	DownTown	31-5750-29313	BamBam
	TinselTown Rebellion	(713) 453-2153	The Viper
	Enterprize Elite	(313) 442-7543	The Humble Babe
	Festering Pit	(206) 481-2728	Belgarion
	Inner Circle	+46-31-304142	Wico
	The Inferno	(416) 841-1933	Black Plague
	House of Lords	(714) 681-9219	Lord Sterling
Dist.	The P.I.T.S. (5 Nodes)	(718) THE-PITS	The PieMAN
	Elusive Dream	(317) 452-1257	The Toyman
Sites	The Wall	(716) PRI-VATE	Pink Floyd
	Twilight Zone	(617) 777-7777	Raistlin
	The Ice Castle	(+47) PRI-VATE	The Iceman
	Black Ice BBS	(904) 377-1325	Chaos
	Swindler's Stronghold	(703) 722-6051	Loan Shark
	Software Conspiracy	(305) 235-4335	Sparrowhawk
	The Phortress System	(914) 221-0035	The FREEZE
	The Cove	(317) 743-1168	Viper
	BBS a Holic	(213) PRI-VATE	Genesis
	Dark Data Security	(+39) 2 29519751	Tom Cat
	Maximum Security	(408) 867-5139	The WardeN
	Skull Island	(314) 647-3096	Skoal Bandit
	Nemesis	+39-382-935967	Nemesis

For an 8x10 glossy of your favorite Humble Guys member, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

The Humble Guys!
P.O.Box 24541
Nashville, TN 37202

or

The Humble Guys!
Post Restante
p.o. box 99960
7200 NA Zutphen Holland

Send us any letters thanking us for being so incredibly great!! We know you guys worship the ground we walk above, but it's good for you guys to tell us. All letters will be posted on the LSDnet (tm) arts and letters section! Please send any computer hardware you don't need! We can use it! Especially modems and hard drives!!

* Note * All Letter Bombs will be returned to sender.

Call The Humble Guys Voice Mail Box! 615-664-1952! Leave us a message!

Look for The Humble Review magazine coming soon to a BBS near you!

Remember, you too can be either Humble Spittle, a Humble Slave, a Humble Franchise, a THG Distribution site, or even possibly a member. Contact us on Enterprize Elite if you are interested!

Also, Call the Humble 900 number - 1-900-535-4200 ext. 780
NOTE! $2.00 per minute. Updated EVERY Monday Morning!!
Kiddies under 18 MUST have their parents Permission!

SUPPLIERS

The supplying methods for groups in early years weere not too different to today's methods. Store pickups and ordering directly from the company where the main means for many groups. The money would usually come from various payments such as official BBS affiliates. Another more attractive way to supply was to use insiders who are kind of like corporate saboteurs for the pirate scene. Insiders obtain the program directly from the source before it's released to the stores. It saves a lot of effort on the group's behalf as they don't have to keep tabs on the program and they avoid the rush to grab it when it goes to the stores. It also left the crackers more time to tinker around with the program.

A more creative way to obtain pre'store software was for group members to pretend they worked for a gaming magazine. The software companies where usually more then happy to send out their software if given the correct information. But when the companies smartened up this option became less viable.

SCENE ART

There have been artists for the PC ever since there has been ASCII and ANSI. But international groups in the way that we know of today only started in around late 1990. ACID (ANSI Creators In Demand) were the first of these international groups, trend setters who originally specialised in ANSI art and ANSIMation ads. They earned their reputation of being one of the best in their field by supporting the best pirate boards of the time. Just like our demo scene the PC art scene emerged from the pirate scene. Unfortunately this link has long since been lost with the warez scene art becoming second class.

As the PC gained more acceptance in Europe (an area dominated by the Amiga and Atari) some members of the bigger Amiga groups found themselves using or buying these strange PC machines and needed software. So a long line of Commodore cracking groups made their way across to the DOStel system, including Fairlight, Razor 1911 and the merged Tri Star and Red Sector.

THE INTERNET

The Internet has often been used by the scene for various reasons but it never became a serious tool until the early nineties. Little did people know at this time how much this tool would change the scene, to basically create a new generation of pirate scene. Bulletin board systems had always kept the scene secret and underground. A newbie often found it extremely difficult to gain access to even a mediocre local board. Most of these people faced the daunting task of hunting down a system password just to get the logon prompt and then new user password to even apply for membership. But the Internet changed all this, the Internet made everything that was once so hard to obtain so easy. IRC, email, ftp and webpages all open to Joe public. And in 1994 they flooded in, drove after drove causing great despair among the many old schoolers. Many of these people didn't appreciate their turf being overrun by these so-called lamers, so they closed their doors. While the old doors closed new doors opened, newsgroups, top100 web pages, anonymous ftp and the most infamous of all IRC offer channels.

IRC offer channels where originally started by groups to offer releases to their friends but when Fate (the leading Internet courier group in 1995) opened their channel (#fatefiles) to the public, Joe Lamer couldn't resist. Many people copied #fatefile's format (+mnst) and many of these channels failed, especially since most groups totally disapproved of IRC trading.

WWW 1996. WHEN YOU NEVER THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE.

)[RELEASE INFO]([

-^- ADOBE PHOTOSHOP CD-RIP (C) STIRLING TECHNOLOGIES -^-

SUPPLIED BY : WWW'96 TEAM * RELEASE DATE : 06/18/96
CRACKED BY : WWW'96 TEAM * UTIL FORMAT : GRAPHIC UTIL
PACKAGED BY : WWW'96 TEAM * INSTALLATION : SETUP.EXE
SYSTEM TYPE : WIN'3.11/95 * PROTECTION : SERIAL NUMBER
REQUIREMENTS : 25MB H.D, 8+MB RAM

)[RELEASE NOTES]([

HERE IT IS. THE ADOBE PHOTOSHOP.
THIS UTIL ALLOWS YOU, TO TAKE A .GIF/JPG FILE, AND MAKE IT WHAT EVER YOU WANT. THIS IS THE NUMBER ONE GRAPHIC PROGRAM. ENJOY IT!
THE SERIAL NUMBER IS: PWW3DOR3000011-924

)[GROUP NEWS]([

- WE HAVE MADE A HUGE CLEAN UP!!! ALL INACTIVE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN KICKED OUT!!! IF YOU DON'T SEE YOUR NAME INSIDE THE NFO, CONNECT THE HIGH MEMBERSHIP, WE MIGHT HAVE DONE A MISTAKE AND WE REMOVED INCORRECT MEMBERS.
- MAJOR CLEAN UPS LATELY! IF YOU DON'T SEE YOUR NAME IN THE NFO, AND YOU WONDER WHY, THINK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE [OR BETTER YET, WHAT YOU HAVEN'T DONE] AND THAN I'M SURE YOU WON'T NEED TO WONDER ANYMORE.
- BRUTAL KNIGHT HAS JOINED OUR RANKS AS AN AFFILIATE BOARD, THE EXTRAORDINARY. WELCOME ABOARD DUDE!
- WE WELCOME TO OUR HIGH MEMBERSHIP RANKS VIPER! VIPER WILL BE A NET/BBS COORDINATOR, SUPPLIER, CRACKER, AND A COURIER! BEST WISHES AND WELCOME!
- LUNATIC & INSANE HAVE CHANGED THEIR NICK TO MUGGER.
- WE HAVE CLOSED THE APPLYING LIST. PLEASE DO NOT APPLY TO ANY POSITION "ANY" MORE UNLESS WE ASK YOU TO!!!
- LOOKING FOR COURIER HQ AND USA HQ. IF YOU RUN A 7+ NODES BOARD IN THE USA AREA AND YOU WISH TO JOIN AS A USA HQ, APPLY NOW! AND IF YOU RUN A 7+ NODES BOARD IN THE EUROPE AREA, AND WISH TO JOIN AS A COURIER HQ, APPLY NOW!
- STILL AFTER THE LOOK OUT FOR SOME DISTRO SITES, IF YOU WISH TO JOIN OUR RANKS AS A SITE-OP, PLEASE FREE TO APPLY.

)[HIGH MEMBERSHIP]([

BYRON ZED ß KAMICAZ TRIOM ß VIPER ß SLAUGHTER DEAMON

BRUTAL KNIGHT ß BZIKBVOYO ß CYBOX ß CITIZEN LANDICOS ß DARKNOON
DYNAMITE ß DOUBLE IMPACT ß INIGO MONTOYA ß JAGD ß MUGGER ß MGABRATWOX
OMEGA X ß SCORPIONBVUZERO ß STRIX ß SPLINTERBSHRADER ß VULTURE
THE DRUID ß ZORDON

)[SUPPORTIVE BOARDS]([

OUT OF THE BLUE * WORLD HEADQUARTER * 06NODE(S) * INIGO MONTOYA
ZOO STATION * APPLY HEADQUARTER * 03NODE(S) * BZIK & YOYO
STRIX * I-NET HEADQUARTER * 19NODE(S) * STRIX STAFF

HALL OF FAME * MEMBER BOARD * 02NODE(S) * HOF STAFF

FEDERAL SOCIETY * AFFILIATED BOARD * 14NODE(S) * OMEGA X
APSYLON BETA * AFFILIATED BOARD * 08NODE(S) * VULTURE
DRUID'S KEEP * AFFILIATED BOARD * 08NODE(S) * THE DRUID
UNTAMED WORLD * AFFILIATED BOARD * 10NODE(S) * CITIZEN LANDICOS
THE CASTLE OF... * AFFILIATED BOARD * 07NODE(S) * MGA & WATROX
MAD HOUSE * AFFILIATED BOARD * 04NODE(S) * MUGGER
CYBER SHOCK * AFFILIATED BOARD * 05NODE(S) * DARKNOON
THE EXTRAORDINARY * AFFILIATED BOARD * 09NODE(S) * BRUTAL KNIGHT

CLUB X * DISTRIBUTION SITE * xxNODE(S) * 16GD

)[GROUPS GREETS]([

WE GREET EVERYONE, NO DISCRIMINATIONS. ALL WE WANT IS TO
HAVE THE SAME RESPECT LIKE EVERYONE ELSE IN THE SCENES

)[JOINING WWW'96!]([

IF YOU WISH TO JOIN WWW'96 EITHER AS A CRACKER, SUPPLIER, OR AN AFFILIATED BOARD, CONTACT ONE OF OUR PEOPLE.
WE'RE ACCEPTING A VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THOSE WHO WISH TO JOIN OUR RANKS SO PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER US AND THE GROUP, OTHER WISE, DON'T WASTE OUR TIME FOR NOTHING. PLEASE NOTE: WHEN APPLYING THROUGH A BBS, LEAVE VOICE AND FIRST NAME SO YOU COULD BE CONTACTED.
REMEMBER: ONLY THE MOST SERIOUS AND DEDICATED APPLIERS WILL BE ACCEPTED!
REMEMBER THAT MANY INDEVIDUALS WANTS TO JOIN THE GROUP, AND WE'RE ACCEPTING ONLY THE TOP OF THE LINE, AND THE MOST DEDICATED!
QUALITY MAKES THE SHOTS. WE PREFER TO RELEASE SOMETHING USEFULL AND WITH QUALITY RATHER THAN RELEASE IT TO THE INTIRE WORLD IN 10 SECS!
WE ALSO WANT OUR MEMBER IN OUR CHANNEL. THAT WAY THEY'LL PARTICIPATE IN INCOMING ACTIONS, SHOTS WE GONNA MAKE AND OTHER STUFF REGARDING TO THE GROUP. SO IF YOU PLAN NOT TO SHOW UP WHEN NEEDED, DON'T SHOW UP AT ALL.
REMEMBER THAT THE GROUP WON'T CHASE AFTER IT'S MEMBERS, IT SHOULD BE THE OTHER WAY. SO IF YOU THINK WE SHOULD SEARCH FOR YOU DAYS AND NIGHTS, FORGET IT. WE WANT TO HAVE IMMEDIAL CONTACT WITH THE MEMBERS AT LEAST 20H A DAY.

)[REACH US]([

- INTERNET -
IRC : ASK TO JOIN #WWW AND ASK FOR THE APPLICATION FROM ANY OP.
MAIL : E-MAIL AT: SOONTO.BE.UPDATED!
SITE - T3: CHECK OUR FTP SITES AND DOWNLOAD OUR MOST RECENT RELEASES.
HOME PAGE: CHECK OUR HOME PAGE AT: HTTP://STILL.UNDER.CONSTRUCTION!

- LOCAL -
CALL OUR APPLICATION BOARD AND SEND YOUR APPLICATION FORM TO BYRON ZED.
YOU WILL RECEIVE AN ANSWER WITHIN THREE DAYS OR LESS.

CD RIPPING

While the Internet changed the way the scene communicated and traded it was the gaming industry's move to the CD Rom that also helped create the second scene revolution. While CD Rom titles for the PC have been around since 1989 (Sierra/Dynamix) the scene did not take onto this new medium until the mid-nineties. And even at this time no one took it too seriously with many groups creating separate groups for the CD Rom releases. These seperate groups where usually created just to release crapware under a different label. And that is was CD titles where originally considered, crapware. These crapware groups where kind of like the IND releases today, though less anonymous.

Originally these crapware/cd-rom groups would release the whole CD, but it wasn't in ISO format, rather the files were just copied off the CD. But people were not used to these large releases and so Hybrid invented the first cd-rip, where the group would leave out unnecessary parts of the game. But the rippers still had the mentality of the floppy disk: the smaller the better was the goal. So many games where raped to their bare minimum making them pretty boring to play. Playing some of these raped games was like trying to watch a special effects Hollywood blockbuster on a black and white TV with no sound. To add to this many ripped games were poorly cracked with a great number requiring third party utilities such has CD emulators (fakecd.exe).

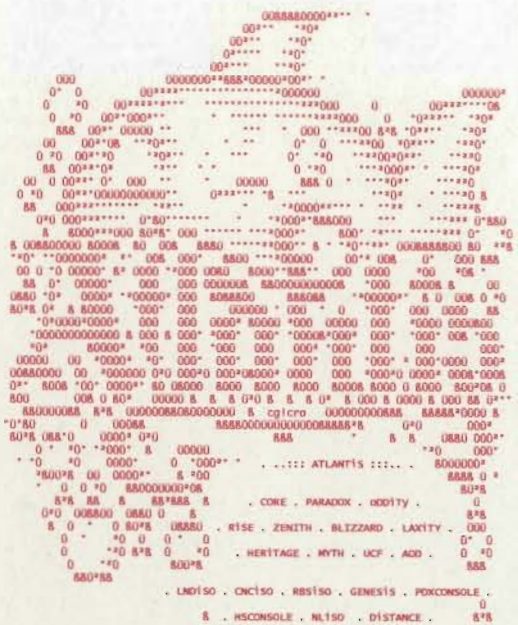
When software publishers started taking advantage of the space available on a CD Rom most of the main game groups agreed on a standard disk limit. On July the 6th 1996 five of these groups formed a pact agreement under the name of Software Pirates Association (SPA). The SPA's goal was to see the enforcement of their "rules of engagement". Any release that broke the SPA rules would be nuked on the affiliated sites. Eventually the SPA fell prey to internal fights created by group politics.

In 1998 the SPA was laid to rest because the groups involved were simply not following the rules. But soon enough the big three groups (Class, Razor 1911, and Paradigm)formed a new organization called The Faction. The faction created a detailed listing of its rules and they released those rules to the public. The biggest change was the upping of the disk limit to 50*2.88 disks (it had been 75*1.44 disks). While other groups changed to the 2.88 disk format some did ignore the 50 disk limit and too many people it just didn't matter anymore.

ISO SCENE (CD IMAGES)

In 1997 the prices of CD writing material became cheaper, this combined with easier access to high speed internet created a new niche market. Full versions of games where wanted and so the ISO scene was created. ISO's are CD images and because they contain the complete CD image they are extremely big. Just like the CD scene three years earlier some of the bigger groups created new sub-groups for this ISO scene.

By 1998 the ISO scene had grown. Gone were the days groups would dupe each others titles on different sites and not even realise it. Also gone where multi-standards in releases. The scene may have been called ISO because that was the original format people used to store the information with but by 1998 everyone had switched to the bin/cue format. Also strangely we discovered in 1998 that some big name rip groups couldn't hack it in this ISO scene. While some others who fared terrible in the rip scene flourished in with ISOs. Probably the biggest controversy in the ISO scene for this year was whether groups should rip out Direct X etc to fit the image onto a standard 74min CD or weather to leave it as a full 80+minutes (which required special CDs to burn properly).



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A BIT OF HISTORY

This introdutory text was written by Stephen Poole, and is available on www.gamespot.com/features/pirates/

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Back in the days when computer games shipped on floppy disks - or on a single disk, if you go back even further - pirating software was a no-brainer: All you had to do was make copies of the original disks and hand them out to friends (or repackage and sell them). Software publishers were painfully aware of just how easy it was for users to duplicate their products; some tried to prevent it by including code that kept key components of the program from working if the installation diskettes were merely copied rather than installed on a hard drive. But the process of installing a game and watching the files being transferred tipped off users about how to counter that move: Just install the game, then copy the files back onto floppy disks - a process made even easier with the emergence of compression programs like PKZIP and LHARC.

To counter this, game publishers came up with a new plan: copy protection. In order to play a game, be it on floppies or installed on the hard drive, you had to input some type of information that supposedly only someone who'd purchased the game would have access to. At first, copy protection schemes were relatively simple - typing in a number or word that appeared somewhere in the manual, for instance. But all it took to get past that hurdle was making photocopies of the manual, a step that actually made it even easier for people to play an illegally copied game since they now had instructions to go along with their pirated game. This ushered in a period where copy protection schemes grew so complex - forcing consumers to align bizarre symbols on coded wheels, pore over charts with black type on a red background that were impossible to photocopy (and nearly impossible to read), slide cards under colored gels - that legitimate users began to roundly complain of having to jump through hoops just to play a game they'd bought. It got so bad, in fact, that a couple of companies created software that automatically skipped the copy-protection routines for hundreds of popular games, provided you entered the correct data once. Game publishers thought such a product blatantly encouraged piracy - but the companies who made the software were quick to point out that people were making illegal copies of their software, too. And at least those companies were legitimate: There were a lot of hackers who could rip the copy-protection routines of games in less time than it took to install the game. But just when it seemed there was absolutely nothing game publishers could do to keep people from duplicating their games for friends or for profit, technology came to the rescue. With the arrival of CD-ROM technology in the early 1990s, games started to become so huge that making copies on floppy disks was essentially impossible, even with compression programs. Naturally, there were still big-time software pirates who could afford incredibly expensive CD-ROM burners to make duplicates. But that sort of equipment was far beyond the reach of the vast majority of people buying PC games, and gradually the whole issue of end users distributing illegal copies of games faded away - until the technological tables turned once again.

BACK WITH A VENGEANCE

There's no way of knowing **how many** copies of games people made for **their friends** during the heyday of the **floppy disk**, but at least game publishers **could** take solace in the fact that each person duping games probably didn't know many people who had the computer hardware - or the interest - to play them. A bigger potential problem was the rise of computer bulletin board systems (BBS), where cracked copies of games were made available for download; this expanded frontier meant that people who wanted to sell or give away games had the world as their neighborhood, with no need to even slap the stuff on floppies for their buddies. These cracked applications were dubbed "warez," while the guys doing the cracking were the "elite." (More on these phrases later.) But dialing into a BBS wasn't something Joe Six-Pack could do very easily: Many BBS users had to deal with staggering long distance charges as slow modems struggled to download stuff, and in some cases there were hourly fees involved as well. So for game companies, the real issues were black-market versions being manufactured and sold in retail outlets as the genuine article and, of course, the problem of people making physial copies of games for their friends. Now that prices for CD-ROM burners have dropped dramatically, and the Internet is a daily part of gamers' lives, the whole question of piracy is back with a vengeance - and, just as in the days of floppy disks, software publishers seem more concerned with people burning ROMs for their friends than people downloading warez. "The biggest problem with pirate software comes from illegal copying of the CDs, whether it's done by big organized duplicators or the one-offs passed from friend to friend," says Doug Kubel, vice president of external development at Interactive Magic. "Most people don't currently have the bandwidth necessary to download an entire game from a warez site, but warez site piracy will climb dramatically with the rise of low-cost high-bandwidth connections such as ADSL

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TeCHn[+] BrAiN$

Proudly Presents:

Release Title: Late Night TV Sexy Show Protection...: Not found...
Copyright (c): Dynabyte Supplied &
Released On..: 16 Gen 1994 Packaged By..: Freddy Krueger

[\] GAME NOTES [/]

Well, this is the latest Dynabyte production.
Unfortunately it is in italian, so you are incouraged to learn
this wonderful language...
The game is pretty cool, but it has some bugs: no matter
how memory free you have, the fucking programmer doesn't know
how to detect it and so the sfx are always disabled
(insufficient memory, sfx disabled).
You can't play without a mouse (the manual says you can use
cursor keys); the game fuck up randomly when you play.

[\] GAME KEYS [/]

When it is your turn, and the subject list is displayed, you can
press these keys:

ESC: To quit (press S to confirm)
F1 : To save the game in progress
F2 : To disable/enable music
F3 : To disable/enable sfx (doesn't works: read above)

Greetings to my mum.

If You Like And Use The Software Please Buy iT.
Support Quality Programmers is In All Of Our interest.

WAREZ IT AT?

So if it's not on the Web, then where's the warez? "If you really want to get warez, the best way is from FTPs or IRC," says Crisis. "It's best if you have your own FTP - then you can just trade accounts with people who have good sites, and you can usually get what you need. If you don't have a site, hop on IRC and hit up the warez chans [channels]. You'll probably find some good FTPs with no ratio [see the glossary]; it just might take awhile before you can get in. There are also chans that play DCC adds, where the major distros [distributors] will be offering certain warez."

But it's not quite as simple as joining an IRC channel and finding out the address of an FTP site that has every single game you wanted but didn't want to pay for. Ask Crisis what the worst part of the warez scene is for him, and he says, "It's probably when you're really looking for something, and none of your contacts has it, so you have to resort to going to IRC and looking like a momo going, 'Does anyone have a copy of XYZ?' That's the worst." And what about the huge size of gaming software? Does someone with a dial-up connection really have the ability to download an entire game? Crisis says that "most warez groups follow the latest 10-point program from The Faction [a consortium of warez groups] that says releases may be no larger then 50x2.88MB (144MB) and must include every level, all sound effects, and be completely playable. Some things that are usually cut out to save space are videos, music, and cutscenes; sometimes those are released separately as optional add-ons. So the size can really vary, but it's often quite small." [To read the entire 10-point program, continue to the end of the story.]

How small? I decided to ask my Half-Life buddy to download a couple games and let me know how big they were and how long it took for the download - and when he came back with the answers, I've got to admit I was pretty shocked. In just over four hours of download time with a 56.6Kbps modem, he managed to download both South Park and Sierra Sports Skiing 1999 Edition; each weighed in at around 30MB. Just like Crisis said, the videos of Picabo Street were missing from Skiing 1999, but otherwise it was a complete version of the game. The warez version of South Park, from a group called Paradigm, even featured a homemade intro of Kenny being killed by the group's logo!

What motivates people like Crisis to go to all the trouble and risk of cracking games and putting them on FTP sites? If they're that much into games, the chances are pretty good that they've got friends they could trade games with in person, rather than online. The reason is that it isn't merely about acquiring games; it's about being one of the elite. "The best thing about warez," Crisis says, "is the opportunity to check out software the day it comes out, or even way before it comes out, without having to pay anything. I love getting my hands on some new game that everyone has been hyping and giving it a run, or having someone say to me, 'Man, did you see that game? It looks real cool - I can't wait till it comes out,' and being able to reply, 'Yeah, I have it, but it's not that great.'"

THE INDUSTRY THAT CRIED WOLF?

The Software and Information Industry Association, or SIIA (formerly the Software Publishers Association, or SPA), doesn't have solid figures on how much illegally copied software costs the PC gaming industry. (SIIA originally agreed to participate in this story, but the organization never responded to requests for input.) Its latest report on piracy of business software, which covers 1997, claims that $11.4 billion was lost due to piracy of business software worldwide, compared with $17.2 billion in revenues generated from legitimate sales. It is problematic to assume these numbers translate to the gaming industry. For one thing, the prohibitive costs of high-end business software applications mean that people are more inclined to seek out illegal copies of those apps than they would if they were looking to acquire much-lower-priced games. It also means that a great many users would simply be unable to afford those business apps even if there were no pirate versions available.

According to the study (which can be viewed at the SIIA site in PDF format), "The difference between software applications installed (demand) and software applications legally shipped (supply) equals the estimate of software applications pirated." Demand was estimated by the number of new and replacement PCs shipped in a year and any legally distributed software that came with them. This methodology also raises questions. Is it accurate to assume that every pirated copy of a high-end business application represents a lost sale? Common sense would imply that this is not the case. Even for relatively lower-priced games, this assumption is difficult to support. Piracy, especially within the warez scene, has too much status attached. People pirate applications they don't want or need, and it is nearly impossible to estimate just how many lost sales are actually represented.

Of course, this doesn't mean software piracy isn't a genuine problem, especially for publishers of business apps. And very few people would dispute the fact that selling or distributing illegal copies of software is wrong. There's a whole slew of reasons put forth by warez groups to justify what they do; some ring very hollow, while others seem to have at least a kernel of sincerity, even if you view the whole scene as not only illegal but immoral as well.

RIGHT AND WRONG

One of the more tired excuses is that prices for computer games are too high - which overlooks the fact that just because something is out of your price range doesn't justify stealing it, and that it only takes a little effort to find legitimate secondhand copies of games at drastically reduced prices. Another justification is that no one's hurt by downloading warez, something that Doug Kubel finds almost amusing. "The lamest excuse I've heard is 'We're not stealing from people, just some big companies,'" he says, "as if big companies aren't a collection of people!" Alan Pavlish says that he's heard users claim that "they're backing up their PlayStation CD," while Doug Lombardi says that "When Day One appeared on the warez sites, they all said, 'Sorry - it's so good, we couldn't wait!'"

Still, some of the arguments put forth by the warez guys point accusatory fingers at the game industry. The SIIA says that one reason software piracy is even more dangerous than piracy of movies and music is that each copy is "perfect." But pirates are quick to point out that the perfect duplicate is of an imperfect product - in other words, so many games are released with bugs and without promised features that it's only reasonable for someone to want to check them out for free before making a trip to the store and shelling out cash only to have to return the games later. If a publisher says these people should try a demo first, the warez guys respond by noting that many bugs can't be found during the short period of play afforded by a demo; if someone says they should check out game reviews, they'll note that for a variety of reasons most reviewers don't mention bugs. And some warez groups at least pay lip service to this notion: At the end of the information file included with the warez version of South Park, for instance, there's a message that says if you like the game then you should go out and buy it. For Crisis and a lot of other guys seriously into warez, though, the crux of the issue is whether you give warez away or try to make money off illegal copies. "Selling pirated games is illegal and immoral for sure, and I think pretty much anyone from the scene will agree with that," he says. "We're about giving people a chance to check out software without paying large amounts of money for it. Personally, I pay for very little software, but if there's something I use regularly, and it's priced right, I may buy it. I had Quake II warez for a long time, and I played it so much I went out and bought a copy. I will not, however, pay thousands of dollars for MS Developer Studio Enterprise Edition just so I can write apps in C that I don't make money off of. Basically, most people in the warez scene are out there to give people an alternative to paying big bucks and making software developers realize that consumers don't have to pay full price if they don't want to. I think a lot of developers keep this in mind now when they set a sticker price."

AND THE BEAT GOES ON

While many companies are in the process of taking steps to prevent the burning of game CDs, others see the problem as going even deeper - and much closer to home. Doug Lombardi says that when warez games go online before the final product has shipped, then someone the company trusted and sent code to has obviously leaked it in one way or another. "Tracking down the source of the leak is something of an exhaustive effort and one that must be thought out in advance - after all, we are talking about piracy on the Internet," he says. "Unfortunately, this is going to cause publishers and developers to be even more cautious about releasing code, and it's likely that less code will be given out during development because each CD must be watermarked (if you will) with a unique ID of some sort that must be logged into a tracking file. Then, if someone has posted the code given to them, the owner can track it by the mark."

Most software publishers probably take the attitude that while this is a war they must fight, it's not one in which they'll ever see final victory: For every scheme devised to prevent illegal copying, there's someone who'll find a way around it, and the only people truly put out will be gamers who have to plug a dongle into their parallel port to play a game. Perhaps a new approach is in order: A few very successful game publishers (who will remain unnamed) have told me off the record that they don't mind people distributing pirated versions of their games because it generates a larger fan base - which in turn has the effect of increasing sales for the company's next product. Don't expect the issue to go away anytime soon, though. And until it does, perhaps we should modify that old saw about the only things in life that are certain are death, taxes, and warez.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Delve deeper into the world of warez, and you'll come across several common words and phrases. While the more serious crowd likes to shun this lingo, you still see it cropping up occasionally - especially derisive terms like "lamer."

To find out what everything means, I turned to *The New Hacker's Dictionary* (Version 4.0.0, Jul 25 1996). Thanks to Eric Raymond for permission to re-publish this, and I encourage everyone to check out the dictionary - it's fascinating reading no matter what subject you're interested in.

Warez / weirz (n.) Widely used in cracker subcultures to denote cracked version of commercial software, that is versions from which copy-protection has been stripped. Hackers recognize this term but don't use it themselves.

Warez d00dz / weirz doodz (n.) A substantial subculture of crackers refer to themselves as 'warez d00dz'; there is evidently some connection with BIFF here. As "Ozone Pilot," one former warez d00d, wrote:

"Warez d00dz get illegal copies of copyrighted software. If it has copy protection on it, they break the protection so the software can be copied. Then they distribute it around the world via several gateways. Warez d00dz form badass group names like RAZOR and the like. They put up boards that distribute the latest ware, or pirate program. The whole point of the Warez subculture is to get the pirate program released and distributed before any other group. I know, I know. But don't ask, and it won't hurt as much. This is how they prove their poweress [sic]. It gives them the right to say, "I released King's Quest IVXIX before you so obviously my testicles are larger." Again don't ask..."

The studly thing to do if one is a warez d00d, it appears, is emit '0-day warez,' that is copies of commercial software copied and cracked on the same day as its retail release. Warez d00ds also hoard software in a big way, collecting untold megabytes of arcade-style games, pornographic GIFs, and applications they'll never use onto their hard disks.

As Ozone Pilot acutely observes: "[BELONG] is the only word you will need to know. Warez d00dz want to belong. They have been shunned by everyone, and thus turn to cyberspace for acceptance. That is why they always start groups like TGW, FLT, USA and the like. Structure makes them happy. [...] Warez d00dz will never have a handle like "Pink Daisy" because warez d00dz are insecure. Only someone who is very secure with a good dose of self-esteem can stand up to the cries of fag and girlie-man. More likely you will find warez d00dz with handles like: Doctor Death, Deranged Lunatic, Hellraiser, Mad Prince, Dreamdevil, The Unknown, Renegade Chemist, Terminator, and Twin Turbo. They like to sound badass when they can hide behind their terminals. More likely, if you were given a sample of 100 people, the person whose handle is Hellraiser is the last person you'd associate with the name."

Cracker (n.) One who breaks security on a system. Coined ca. 1985 by hackers in defense against journalistic misuse of hacker (q.v., sense 8). An earlier attempt to establish 'worm' in this sense around 1981-82 on Usenet was largely a failure.

Use of both these neologisms reflects a strong revulsion against the theft and vandalism perpetrated by cracking rings. While it is expected that any real hacker will have done some playful cracking and knows many of the basic techniques, anyone past larval stage is expected to have outgrown the desire to do so except for immediate, benign, practical reasons (for example, if it's necessary to get around some security in order to get some work done).

Thus, there is far less overlap between hackerdom and crackerdom than the mundane reader misled by sensationalistic journalism might expect. Crackers tend to gather in small, tight-knit, very secretive groups that have little overlap with the huge, open poly-culture this lexicon describes; though crackers often like to describe themselves as hackers, most true hackers consider them a separate and lower form of life.

Ethical considerations aside, hackers figure that anyone who can't imagine a more interesting way to play with their computers than breaking into someone else's has to be pretty losing. Some other reasons crackers are looked down on are discussed in the entries on cracking and phreaking.

Elite (adj.) Clueful. Plugged-in. One of the cognoscenti. Also used as a general positive adjective. This term is not actually hacker slang in the strict sense; it is used primarily by crackers and warez d00dz. Cracker usage is probably related to a 19200cps modem called the 'Courier Elite' that was widely popular on pirate boards before the V.32bis standard. A true hacker would be more likely to use 'wizardly.'

Hacker (n.) [originally, someone who makes furniture with an axe] 1. A person who enjoys exploring the details of programmable systems and how to stretch their capabilities, as opposed to most

```
                    -*-*-*-*-*-* FUCK OFF, TDT *-*-*-*-*-*-

    In this textfile, I will rag on TDT and the whole bunch of lamers
    associated with them. Also, I will explain WHY I'm doing this. The
    reason is the recent release of Might & Magic IV by Fairlight, TDT
    and of course RAZOR. First off, the Razor version was the only one
    that has been put out COMPLETELY CRACKED AND WORKING unlike the
    Flt and TDT versions. Now, two days later TDT puts out a "crackfix"
    which is supposed to be 100% and that "you can use on the Razor and
    FLT versions". Of course I was very suspicious about TDT's late
    fix and so I downloaded this shit and looked at it since they
    claimed that there was more than ONE doc check in the game. Here's
    what I found....

ÚÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄ¿
³TDT - how stupid they REALLY are....³
ÀÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÙ

    OK, let's start. I will explain a _little_ of tech background to
    you so that you're able to understand what I'm talking about.
    The actual protection routine in Might & Magic IV is located in
    a file called XEEN.DAT. This file is not a data file, but a renamed
    EXE file. Also, New World Computing used PKLite to compress it and
    make it harder to change stuff in it, however, we all know how to
    get rid of PKlite, don't we ?

    OK, well, after I got rid of PKLite I ran a filecompare between my
    version and the one TDT put out. Here's the result:

    Comparing files XEEN.DAT and MYXEEN.DAT
    0001D02A: 8E 38 <ÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄ¿
    00026C9D: 90 9A <ÄÄÄÄ¿                              *
    00026C9E: 90 00 <ÄÄÄÄ´                              *
    00026C9F: 90 00 <ÄÄÄÄ´                              *
    00026CA0: 90 CC <ÄÄÄÄ´                    this is the only
    00026CA1: 90 15 <ÄÄÄÄ´                    byte required to
                    *                         crack the game.
                    *
            these are the bytes TDT
            changed to "crack" the game.

    Now, here's a litte explanantion of the bytes and what they mean.
    If you don't know alot of assembly, don't worry if you don't
    understand it. Actually the whole point of all this is that the
    TDT version IS NOT WORKING ! Hahaha... Yes, you got me right.
    TDT FUCKED UP THEIR CRACK, if you try to bypass the protection,
    THE GAME WON'T LET YOU CONTINUE PLAYING.

    Let me just explain what I did to crack the game:
    The first byte you see at 1DD2A is an offset for a JMP instruction.
    The original value in an uncracked version of MMIV is 8E and to
    crack the game I changed it to 38. The reason is that the JMP
    originally leads to the protection routine that asks you to enter
    a certain word from a certain page in the manual. What I did is
    to bypass the protection check in a way that the routine assumes
    that you've already entered the correct word. That's why in my
    version the protection doesn't even show up anymore. Also, that
    way I don't have to worry HOW MANY protection checks there are in
    the game. No matter how many times the protection routine is called,
    it will ALWAYS return the correct result and let you go on playing.

    Now, in the TDT version SOMEONE thought he has to be a REAL smartass
    motherfucker. Here is what the dumbass did:
    Translated to assembly, the five bytes starting at 26c9D will come
    out as a FAR call instruction

    CALL 15CC:0000

    This CALL will lead to the protection and ask you for a word
    from the manual.

    TDT's lame-o cracker changed this CALL-instruction to something
    else:

    NOP
    NOP
    NOP
    NOP
    NOP

    Well, what the dick was trying to do is to bypass the protection
    simply by not even CALLING the protection routine. So, what's
    wrong you may ask, if the protection is not even called, what is
    Onyx moaning about !? Well, let me explain.

    First of all there might be more than ONE call to the protection in
    the game. The way I cracked it, the protection may be called 100reds
    of times and each time it will come out fine, but in the TDT version
    you can't be sure that there's not another CALL to the protection
    somewhere else in the game. So, how do you fuckers in TDT even DARE
    to tell people that "there's more than ONE check in the game", eh ?
    DON'T YOU LAMERS UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN IF THERE IS MORE THAN ONE
    CHECK, YOUR GODDAMN VERSION WILL NOT WORK UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES
    BECAUSE YOU ONLY REMOVED *ONE* OF THEM ? Fuck you lamers, you should
    go back to cracking school and LEARN how to do things correctly.

ÚÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄ¿
³TDT - my grandma can do better cracks *³
ÀÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÙ

    Now here's what's even WORSE about TDT's crack:

    Due to the fact that the file XEEN.DAT is an EXE file, it contains
    lots of addresses that have to be relocated when the file is loaded
    to memory. This is refered to as the relocation table. I will not
    go into a too much detailed explanation of the EXE file structure
    here, but it all comes down to the fact that Sir Platinum doesn't
    seem to know a shit about DOS and EXE files.

    Each entry in the relocation table points to an instruction of
    the program that needs to be altered to make the program work.
    Something called a SEGMENT-OFFSET has to be added to some instructions
    to make them work correctly. In this case, the CALL instruction that
    TDT changed needed to be relocated. To make it a little bit more
    understandable for you, here's an example:

    un-relocated instruction:       bytes in memory:

    CALL 15CC:0000                  9A 00 00 CC 15

    Now, let's assume the program has been loaded to segment offset 1234
    the whole thing would look like this AFTER the relocation:

    relocated instruction:          bytes in memory:

    CALL 2800:0000                  9A 00 00 00 28

    The segment offset of 1234 has been ADDED to the original offset
    of 15CC. The result is 2800. This is how it SHOULD look like.

    Now how did TDT fuck up ? Here's how....
    Since DOS does an automatic relocation of all entries in the
    relocation table, it will not check if the relocation it just made
    was VALID. To cut a long explanation short, here's what it looks
    like with the TDT version:
                        AAA
    un-relocated instruction(s):    bytes in memory:

    NOP                             90
    NOP                             90
    NOP                             90
    NOP                             90
    NOP                             90

    After the relocation process....

    relocated instruction(s):       bytes in memory:

    NOP                             90
    NOP                             90
    NOP                             90
    LES SP,[BP+SI+0509]             C4 A2 ....

    The offset 1234 has been added to the 9090 bytes that represtented
    the NOP instructions.

    Due to the fact that Sir Platinum changed the original JMP
    instruction to NOP instructions, the relocation will create
    a new, UNPREDICTABLE instruction instead of the NOPs. As a
    result THE GAME MIGHT EVEN CRASH ! YES, YOU GOT IT RIGHT, THE
    WAY TDT CRACKED THIS MIGHT CRASH THE GAME ! Fuck you kids...
    You apparently don't know a flying fuck about what you're doing.

    Don't you fuckers know that according to what is added to your
    NOP instuctions the actual CODE changes every time ? The instruc-
    tions created might be total NONSENSE and lock up the game.
    Goddamnit.... you lamers are so fucken stupid, you shouldn't be
    allowed to touch games like Might & Magic IV since all you do is
    to FUCK THEM UP.

    OK, Sir Lametinum, here's what you COULD have done even tho it
    STILL wouldn't get rid of ALL the doc checks in the game, just
    this particular one:

    9A 00 00 CC 15          CALL 15CC:0000

    could have been changed to

    90                      NOP
    EB 02                   JMP IP+02 <A¿jumps OVER the relocation
    CC 15                   XXXX       ³offset.
    ..                      ..<ÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÄÙ
    .                       .

    Obviously you're not a proffessional cracker, just a little dumb-o
    wannbe that still has alot to learn to play in the MAJOR LEAGUE
    together with the BIG BOYS....

    Also, to all of you out there, take this as a WARNING and think twice
    before you decide to download a TDT release in the future. Who knows,
    the "change" they make to a program might accidently format your hard
    drive....

    GO FOR QUALITY - GO FOR RAZOR RELEASES ! WE KNOW OUR BUSINESS !

                                                    - ONYX [RAZOR 1911]
                                                      10/04/92
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users, who prefer to learn only the minimum necessary; 2. One who programs enthusiastically (even obsessively) or who enjoys programming rather than just theorizing about programming; 3. A person capable of appreciating hack value; 4. A person who is good at programming quickly; 5. An expert at a particular program, or one who frequently does work using it or on it; as in 'a Unix hacker'. (Definitions 1 through 5 are correlated, and people who fit them congregate.); 6. An expert or enthusiast of any kind. One might be an astronomy hacker, for example; 7. One who enjoys the intellectual challenge of creatively overcoming or circumventing limitations; 8. [deprecated] A malicious meddler who tries to discover sensitive information by poking around. Hence 'password hacker', 'network hacker'. The correct term for this sense is cracker.

The term 'hacker' also tends to connote membership in the global community defined by the net (see network, the and Internet address). It also implies that the person described is seen to subscribe to some version of the hacker ethic (see hacker ethic).

It is better to be described as a hacker by others than to describe oneself that way. Hackers consider themselves something of an elite (a meritocracy based on ability), though one to which new members are gladly welcome. There is thus a certain ego satisfaction to be had in identifying yourself as a hacker (but if you claim to be one and are not, you'll quickly be labeled bogus).

Lamer (n.) [prob. originated in skateboarder slang]: Synonym for luser, not used much by hackers but common among warez d00dz, crackers, and phreakers. Oppose elite. Has the same connotations of self-conscious elitism that use of luser does among hackers.

Crackers also use it to refer to cracker wannabees. In phreak culture, a lamer is one who scams codes off others rather than doing cracks or really understanding the fundamental concepts. In warez d00dz culture, where the ability to wave around cracked commercial software within days of (or before) release to the commercial market is much esteemed, the lamer might try to upload garbage or shareware or something incredibly old (old in this context is read as a few years to anything older than 3 days).

Leech (n.) Among BBS types, crackers and warez d00dz, one who consumes knowledge without generating new software, cracks, or techniques. BBS culture specifically defines a leech as someone who downloads files with few or no uploads in return, and who does not contribute to the message section. Cracker culture extends this definition to someone (a lamer, usually) who constantly presses informed sources for information and/or assistance, but has nothing to contribute.

Luser / loo'zr (n.) A user; esp. one who is also a loser. (luser and loser pronounced identically.) This word was coined around 1975 at MIT. Under ITS, when you first walked up to a terminal at MIT and typed Control-Z to get the computer's attention, it printed out some status information, including how many people were already using the computer; it might print "14 users", for example. Someone thought it would be a great joke to patch the system to print "14 losers" instead. There ensued a great controversy, as some of the users didn't particularly want to be called losers to their faces every time they used the computer. For a while several hackers struggled covertly, each changing the message behind the back of the others; any time you logged into the computer it was even money whether it would say "users" or "losers". Finally, someone tried the compromise "lusers", and it stuck. Later one of the ITS machines supported luser as a request-for-help command. ITS died the death in mid-1990, except as a museum piece; the usage lives on, however, and the term 'luser' is often seen in program comments.

Poser (n.) A wannabee; not hacker slang, but used among crackers, phreaks and warez d00dz. Not as negative as lamer or leech. Probably derives from a similar usage among punk-rockers and metalheads, putting down those who "talk the talk but don't walk the walk".

RATIOS?

One word I encountered a lot while researching warez was "ratio," usually in the form of "ratios suck!" A ratio refers to a practice of some warez sites in which you must upload a certain amount of data in order to download stuff. If a site had a 1:3 ratio, for instance, you'd have to upload 10MB of stuff in order to download a 30MB file. It's a system that's supposed to ensure that everyone contributes to the scene, but serious warez groups already exchange apps freely on a regular basis anyway.

What follows is The Faction's 10 Point Program, a sort of moral code for distributing warez. The font and manual line-breaks in the original copy of The Faction have been removed, but except for a capitalization the text remains unchanged.

THE FACTION 10 POINT PROGRAM:

1. The disk limit is as of now 50 x 2.88 megabytes or 2,915,328 bytes. This equates to a total of 144 megabytes of compressed data or145,766,400 bytes. Using 2.88 megabyte archives enables us to keep the standard 8 character filename with a 3 character extension. This will also help contribute to the elimination of the 'missing disk' phenomenon, plaguing end-users worldwide. Acceptable compression formats at this time are ACE and RAR, followed by the traditional PKZIPing.

2. Every release under this limit will be a functionally and playably complete game. This means that included will be every component necessary for the successful completion of the game (every level, track, course and other necessary component.)

3. Sound effects WILL and MUST be included.

4. Intros, Outros and Cut-Scenes should be removed if the size of the release is 40 x 2.88 disks or more with them included. Intros should NOT be included in a Movie Addon, only Cut-Scenes and Outro (aka End-Scene) should be included. Animation files, such as .SMKs, should be "framed" and not blacked out. Re-indexing of large files, should consist of an actual re-index, instead of just creating a file full of O's, (which doesn't change re-indexing of large files, but allows it to compress to virtually nothing), thus promoting more quality minded rips and crack.

5. Only 2 Addons should be released per game. Each addon should be no more then 25 x 2.88 megabyte archives.

6. A brief outline of what has been stripped from the game should be clearly stated in the game-release .NFO, as well as information as to whether or not Addons can be expected.

7. Childrens games (aka Kiddie games) and Edutainment software do not qualify under THE FACTION's guidelines for acceptable releases.

8. In regard to games distributed in the United States that are LATER distributed in Europe or vice versa under the same or different name / publisher. These games if released AFTER another group's release are counted as DUPES unless it can be proven that there is a clearly noticeable PLAYABLE difference in the latter release (eg. new levels, enhanced graphics, or other new features).

9. Fully cracked Update patches and Trainers are highly regarded, though they are not the responsibility of any group (including that of which released the original game). If 2 trainers from the same or different group are released for 1 game, this does NOT qualify as a dupe unless the latter trainer provides no new features over the prior trainer.

10. Admittance to THE FACTION is done on an invite / vote-in basis. The group invitation must be proposed before ALL current FACTION member-group representatives. This council operates in a purely democratic manner and all parties therein have upon joining, agreed to follow all stated guidelines of this Declaration of Scene Independence (sic). Today is not only a new dawn in the games scene, but our Independance (sic) Day where differences are at least temporarily put aside and our unity re-consolidated.

This document was signed & approved on October 17th, 1998 by the following individuals, representing their respective groups:

Mr. Skill - [CLASS] - ZEUS [PARADIGM] - The Punisher [RAZOR 1911]

.:: Interview with DeepzOn3/Radium::.

Enjoy guyz, here is an hot interview with DeepzOn3, one of the best world cracker. DeepzOn3, u know the guy who works for Radium. Special thnx to him for answer to all these questions. Listen :)

Wed Aug 26 18:44:12 1998

<_KaY_> Hi :)
<DeepzOn3> Hi
<KaY_> What was the hardest prog to crack and why was it so hardest?
<DeepzOn3> Well... the hardest was Logic 3.0... It was some weeks of work... I started just checking how the program talks with the dongle... but know what they talk is not enough... all times the dialog is different and I had to know why was different and fix that... this was really the hard work and never was found before.
<_KaY_> Is it the best protection ever developed?
<DeepzOn3> There is no 100% secure protection scheme... This was just the hardest I seen but Im sure there is more secure ones... I Heard from a friend a protection scheme that is harder than this... he couldnt fix it so Im sure must be harder cause he is damn good. It was in use data like a dongle but from a Internet Server so without internet connection cant be started...
<_KaY_> Whats the goal for a cracker, only challenge?
<DeepzOn3> Yes but learn too... For me all started trying to learn how the programs works... I think is like a chess party :)
<_KaY_> hehe cool :) I love chess so i can understand what do u mean. What sort of knowledges do need a cracker, what does he need to study, is it long?
<DeepzOn3> Well... a cracker must be curious, very patient and must know some programming... specially assembler. Must know windows API too. I did my first crck about two years ago and now I have much more level. I learned how to do a serial, cd check, some dongles, and more stuff... For one guy that want to start
I only can say that he must read lot tutorials... (I only readed one hehe) and he must have lot free time couse this is very addictive... If anyone starts cant leave till know how to crack... the app he started.
<_KaY_> Are there lot of risks without software developers and SPA, i mean real risks?
<DeepzOn3> For now I only had job opportunities with this...
<_KaY_> Really? Now u maybe able to set good protections for developers, or is it totally different job?
<DeepzOn3> Well... as I know how a cracker work I can develop a good protection but never a non crackeable one... cause there is no 100% secure protection. you remember?... So why to protect if cant be protected 100%?
<_KaY_> Have u got friendly contacts with protections developers, do u trade ideas with them?
<DeepzOn3> A few. Well... I just talk about how hard it was or how they can make it more secure.
<_KaY_> Does it exist any competition between crackers?
<DeepzOn3> Maybe between groups but not with crackers... at least about me.
<_KaY_> Have u got any idea about the ultimate protection, what could it be?
<DeepzOn3> Well.. maybe a dialog with a server using Internet to get data for the app using data on the user machine: UserName, SerialNumber, etc... like a dongle but the dongle is on a Server... and all requests are logged and if there is too much time betwen two requests something wrong is happening hehe :D this will be something but Im sure not enough.
<_KaY_> Is there an important thing u would like to tell to radium software users?
<DeepzOn3> Just that they must think in buy the software if they really use it lot... if you get it just for try its ok but if they are using it to get money they must think at the developers too... Without them the scene cant continue ;)
<_KaY_> Will u continue for a long time to crack music software for users?
<DeepzOn3> ahh sorry... Well as I said this is a very addictive thing so I think I will be doing till I had no time for that... for now I spent lot of my free time in that but I love cracking and I like music software.
<_KaY_> Thanx

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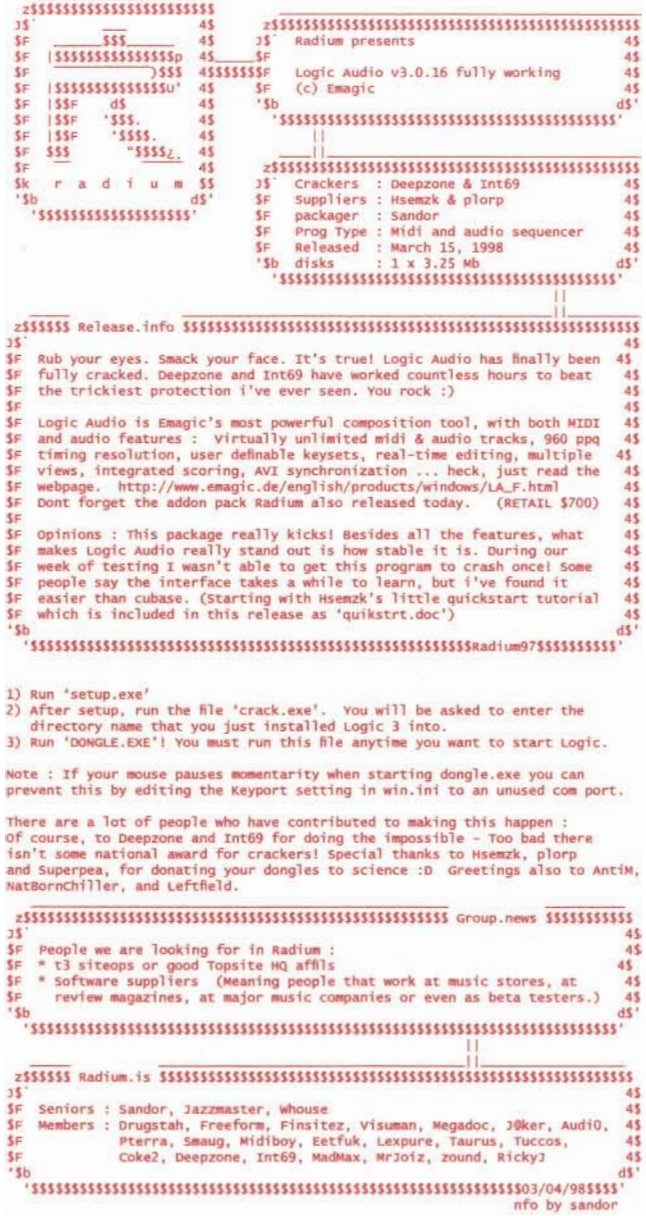
Last Updated: 18-12-2000



.:: Interview with Sandor/Radium ::.

Enjoy guyz, here is the 1st official Radium interview, an hot interview with Sandor himself.

Fri Aug 28 00:16:47 1998

<_KaY_> When did Radium group was created?
<Sandor> Back in July 1997.. a little over a year ago :)
<_KaY_> Whats is the primary goal of this group?
<Sandor> Well, i remember especially downloading my 12th copy of a 'Cubase 3.0 crack fully working', and it didnt work at all, audiowarez was really getting neglected by warez groups, and a lot of the releases didnt work or were very badly tested, so i figured it was time someone who actually used the apps started releasing them :) So now, our goal is to release programs that will be useful to Musicians and try our best to make sure they work well.Our goal is also to have fun :) We are all doing things that we like to do - cracking or making installers or gfx, etc...
<_KaY_> Was it hard to create this group, i mean was it hard to find suppliers, good crackers...?
<Sandor> Yes actually. At first it was just DeepzOne and myself, and we released together a little number of programs like soundforge cd architect. But then DeepzOne had to leave for a while and for a little time it was just me. I was very close to dropping Radium, because im not a cracker, but things started going well, and i met Whouse, and then JazzMaster. Jazz had some experience in cracking dongles, and we decided to jump in and tackle a big program: (Cubase 3.5). It took us a long time, an we spent weeks and weeks testing.After we released Cubase Score, things took off again and we met up with Pterra-X and Freeform. After some time, we had released quite a few bigger programs like Cakewalk 6.01.At that time, j@ker was hanging out on ABSU (alt.binaries.sound.utilies) and was doing cracks there. I emailed him and he was very happy to join, meet other crackers and get new interesting things to crack. After a few months, DeepzOne was free and came back into Radium again, and then Drugstah joined too... and with all that cracking talent its been hard sometimes to keep them busy with enough things to crack :D
<_KaY_> At the beginning of your group what was the way to find software, coz its very expensive?
<Sandor> Thats always been the hardest part! Some Radium members work in music stores, so that helps, but we've recieved a lot of programs and support from certain people on #audiowarez, and most recently a few people have goten together to help buy some programs that noone seems to be able to get, but would be very good to have cracked.
<_KaY_> Do members meet just online or do they have already met in real life?
<Sandor> Radium is very much across the world - Europe and North America so its hard to meet. Since Radium has gotten more well known, Im also fairly protective of my real identity, as most other Radium members are too. However we have become very good friends over time, working together, chatting, having fun, helping.. so its not impossible we might fly somewhere to meet someday.
<_KaY_> Does the channel #audiowarez was created at the same time u created the group?
<Sandor> I created #audiowarez a few months after Radium began. At that time there was not any channel about this type of thing on effnet. Of course it started small, just one bot (hi sugarush!) and a dozen people, but it grew really fast.. now on some days #aw has had over 200 people in the channel at one time.
<_KaY_> Whats the goal of this channel and if it continues to grow will u fix a limit (invite only or pass)?
<Sandor> Audiowarez doesnt really have a goal.. its just us musicians all meeting to gab about what we love - making music and using music software :) When Radium people have time, we try and help out if people have technical problems, or dont know how to apply a crack, etc... I cant imagine a day when #audiowarez went invite only... for the most part i think the channel runs really well, and the people who come regulary are really great people! And btw, many thanks to Ism, steph and slip - who have helped out so much in the channel.
<_KaY_> Which important rules would u want to remind to #audiowarez users?
<Sandor> Well i dont need to anymore.. the DOOt bot seems to do it all haha
<_KaY_> :))
<Sandor> People in the channel seem to be helping each other a good bit recenly .. settig up an ftp to help those who dont have things, sending a program to someone who needs it, or helping solve common problems :)
<_KaY_> Some rumors tell the group became famous all around the world and some software companies contact your group to delay cracked releases of their softs, is it true? Have u got any contacts with software companies?
<Sandor> Yes, ive talked to some of the programmers of the software. And overall, its been surprisingly friendly. There has been only one developer who came and complained that he didnt want his program released, and so we havent actually, but then he came back in complaining later that he didnt have enough promotion, and started advertising in the channel.. But you cant have it both ways. There have been some odd experiences, like programmers contacting us asking how they can make their audio protection better. ;) But the rumor about Propellorheads contacting us asking us to delay the release of Rebirth wasnt true. We had a hard time getting the program at first, and then the protection was EXTREMELY complex of course.. they had a lot of time to work on it. We've never talked to the propellorheads - although they did make an offer and say they thought it would be interesting to chat about protection. Im sure it would be an interesting converstation if it ever happened ;)
<_KaY_> Do software companies estimate they lost lot of money till Radium exists?
<Sandor> Thats a hard question.. how do

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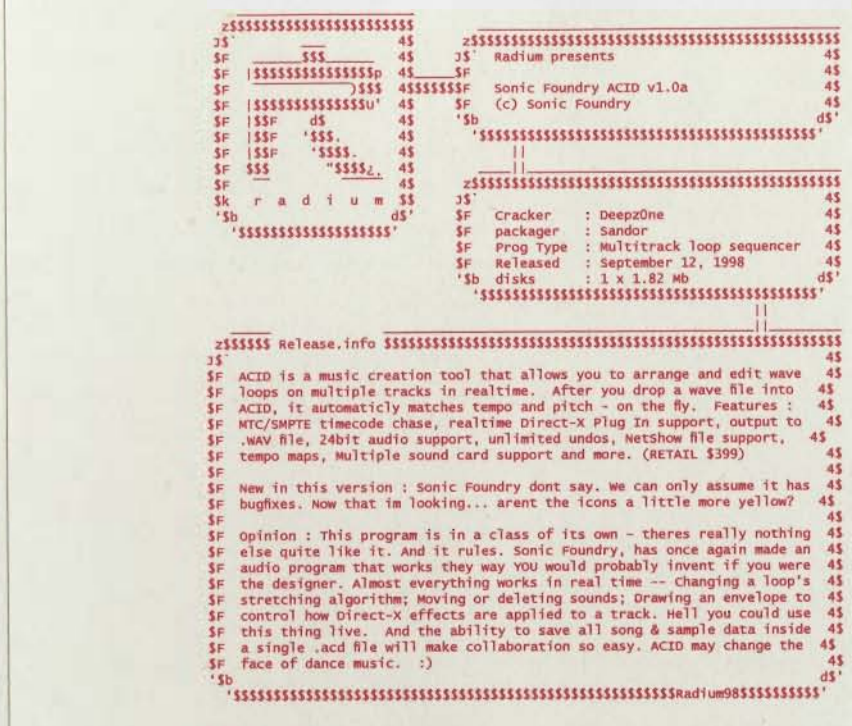

Review from Zenta :
This program simply *rocks* I just cant recommend it enough. Its not just for playing loops but also for any other kind of digital multitracking.. Just excellent. Hopefully midi support will be along shortly but as far as this update is concerned I think it is mainly about updating the DX Plugin support and small minor bug fixes. As always.. Good work from Sonic Foundry.

.:: Interview with Yazz / Radium ::.

Fri Oct 29 23:57:04 1998

<_KaY_> Hi :)
<Yazz> Hi
<_KaY_> Till how long time do u crack software and how did u begin?
<Yazz> Since 1984 on an old Commodore 64 imported from West Germany, i couldnt buy any softs so i cracked them to get them.
<_KaY_> Whats your main goal when you crack a new program?
<Yazz> Its only fun and learning more about Pc system.
<_KaY_> What sort of knowledges do u use to crack proggies? Was it hard or long to learn?
<Yazz> The longest to get was experience and to combine asm c coding with understanding in the same time what it does.
<_KaY_> Do u use in real life your knowledges to gain money? I mean do u work in computers domain or is it just a passion?
<Yazz> No my job is absolutely different...
<_KaY_> What are your hobbies in life? Have u got enough time for private life and your cracker work?
<Yazz> No real hobbies (except cracking), only little bowling.
<_KaY_> Do u practice music in life?
<Yazz> No absolutely nothing, I cant play a note!
<_KaY_> How did u meet Radium? Why did u accept to work with that group?
<Yazz> i meet radium after my cracks for Cubase released for the group called Pentium. Radium has the best power in group management i ever seen! This structure is absolutely cool.
<_KaY_> I heard u work for other groups b4? What was them?
<Yazz> ~ Pentium-pft now apps ~ Dynasty games ~ Paradigm games ~ Paradox german apps ~ and last but not least Radium.
<_KaY_> Which crackers work do u most appreciate? (best coders)
<Yazz> ~ Deepzone of Radium ~ Beowolf of Razor ~ Grudge of Class ~ Brainski in coding c win98 ~ and Hankman a newcomer.
<_KaY_> Do u think it could be risky for u in the future to still crack pro-software like Vst? Aren't u afraid of Steinberg reactions when they see each time '<Yazz>' nickname in the nfos? ;)
<Yazz> Hmmm... I'm not sure, all cracking is risky, but selling cracked stuff is more.
<_KaY_> Do u think one day u could stop to crack software?
<Yazz> Hmmm... Hard question, i could say yes when i will find a full job which needs my full life - but cracking will stays a little hobby for me till the end of my days on earth :)
<_KaY_> Did u ever find uncrackable software?
<Yazz> No all is crackable, its only a question of time and power.
<_KaY_> Have u got some contacts with soft-developers?
<Yazz> No
<_KaY_> Would u like to work on the other side? I mean would u like to help software companies or developers to set better protections? (Maybe u alredy did it...?)
<Yazz> No they didn't have all phantasies to do easy and good things.
<_KaY_> Can u imagine an ultimate protection in the future, what would it be?
<Yazz> No. Someone tried with pecrypt 1.02 by using randomized functions, but its too much difficult to understand to be able to use it. I have many ideas to set one but no one is really good at all.
<_KaY_> Whats your story with Cubase? Why are u the only good cracker of this prog?
<Yazz> Ha! Its only a story of time, i spent very long time to study Cubase protection till its out.
<_KaY_> Why VST is so hard to crack especially? How does work the dongle protection?
<Yazz> Its not easy to explain in few words. The more difficult in that protection is the program reads information's in the dongle, and each information is different for each function u use.
<_KaY_> Does the 3.6 version is harder to crack than the old ones? why?
<Yazz> Yes, i think. Im not sure but it seems they did something more than dongle calls.
<_KaY_> How many time do u think u need to crack the new 3.6 update (approx)?
<Yazz> 1 week with all testing and checking i hope!
<_KaY_> Could it be possible to emulate a 100% software dongle that will support all the future updates?
<Yazz> Yes with really hard work.
<_KaY_> What are the bugs differences beetween your 3553 crack and the dongle version?
<Yazz> There is none.
<_KaY_> Did u get some feedback yet from steinberg about your cracks?
<Yazz> No and i hope i wont get some in the future.
<_KaY_> Did u try to work on Logic protection yet? Do u think Cubase dongle is harder of Logic one to crack?
<Yazz> Yes i tried it, a hard thing in 16/32 bit coding with segmentation. Deepzon3 and int 69 are the best guyz for this job. 40% logic 60% steinberg
<_KaY_> What do u think about warez, could it become death of software development?
<Yazz> No. Most warez dont work for users. They must pay and get beta version without testing and something, This is the real prob!
<_KaY_> What would u like to add or tell to audiowarez users?
<Yazz> I hope you like Radium :)
<_KaY_> Thnx for all <Yazz> :))

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Last Updated: 18-12-2000

Release.info

Cubase VST is a midi and audio sequencer. It features realtime editing, unlimited MIDI tracks, Phrase Synthesizer, Video Playback, Drum Editor, AutoAccompaniment, Graphical Mastertrack Editor, Direct-X effects, etc.
More info at : http://www.steinberg-us.com/products/vst/index.html

Opinions : Applause to Steinberg for finally documenting what each update fixes in their "bugfixes.wri" file. The list is pretty big :)
See the end of this nfo for a list of VST web pages and FAQs.

Released by Radium today :

Cubase.VST.v3.553.full.install - The main program. NO previous versions are needed to install this! :)
Cubase.VST.v3.553.full.extras - All the extras: docs, libraries, etc

Radium98

How to use "Cubase.VST.v3.553.full.install-Radium" :

1) It is suggested that you first uninstall Cubase Score VST. (This installer will install *Cubase Audio-XT VST* which is a higher version.)
2) Unzip and Run 'VSTSETUP.EXE' and follow the directions :)

Note : All the PDF documents that this setup installs will be 0 bytes in size. You need to get the 'full.extras' pack if you want all the docs, mixmaps, etc.

for reference :
AudioXT serial = 110000000
Score serial = 070000000

A huge congrats to YAZZ! Special thanks to Jazzmastr, [Jesus], Kay, SparkE, Zound, Ib3o3, ScuzzyToo, Ism, Zenta, Radio98, Walstib, Hypermann, Flex, Morphadaz, Levl288, Etheric, F16flyboy, Visuman, Whouse, and SystmCrsh!

Group.news

People we are looking for in Radium :
* t3 siteops or good Topsite HQ affils
* Software suppliers (Meaning people that work at music stores, at review magazines, at major music companies or even as beta testers.)

Radium.is

Seniors : Sandor, Jazzmaster, Whouse
Members : Drugstah, Freeform, Visuman, Megadoc, J0ker, AudiO, Pterra, Smaug, Eetfuk, Lexpure, Taurus, Tuccos, Zound, Coke2, DeepzOne, Int69, MadMax, MrJoiz, RickyJ, cdr400, Yazz, IdMud, Midiboy, IB3o3, Systmcrsh

05/10/98

nfo by sandor

http://home3.swipnet.se/~w-31215/music/ <--- nice FAQ here
http://www.instanet.com/~thedusk/30_frame_set.html
http://www.steinberg-us.com/support/user/index.html

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SOFTWARE PIRACY: AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

Jim Thomas and Gordon Meyer

(5 March, 1990)

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The university policy against computer software piracy has been widely publicized, including in a recent issue of Computing News (December, 1989). There is no question that the university must protect itself against actions of the NIU community for which it could be held legally accountable. However, based on our current research of the "computer underground" and the activities of "phreaks, hackers, and pirates," we find no evidence to support the many value judgments offered in the rationale circulated by the university. These normative judgments contribute to law enforcement tendencies to expand the definitions of illegality and, as one recent government publication has done, to place piracy in the same category of crimes as "computer theft" and "theft of trade secrets." Our intent here is neither to justify software piracy nor to challenge University policy. However, because the area of copyright and "computer abuse" law is so new, and because these laws tend to rely in media and other depictions of "computer underground" activity as criminally sanctionable, we challenge conceptions of underground activity that seem unsubstantiated by evidence.

The university's normative justification of the University policy can be summarized in three broad principles:

1. Software piracy shows disrespect for the intellectual work and property of others and subverts the mission of higher education.

2. Software piracy deprives authors of a "fair return" for their work.

3. Software piracy is unethical.

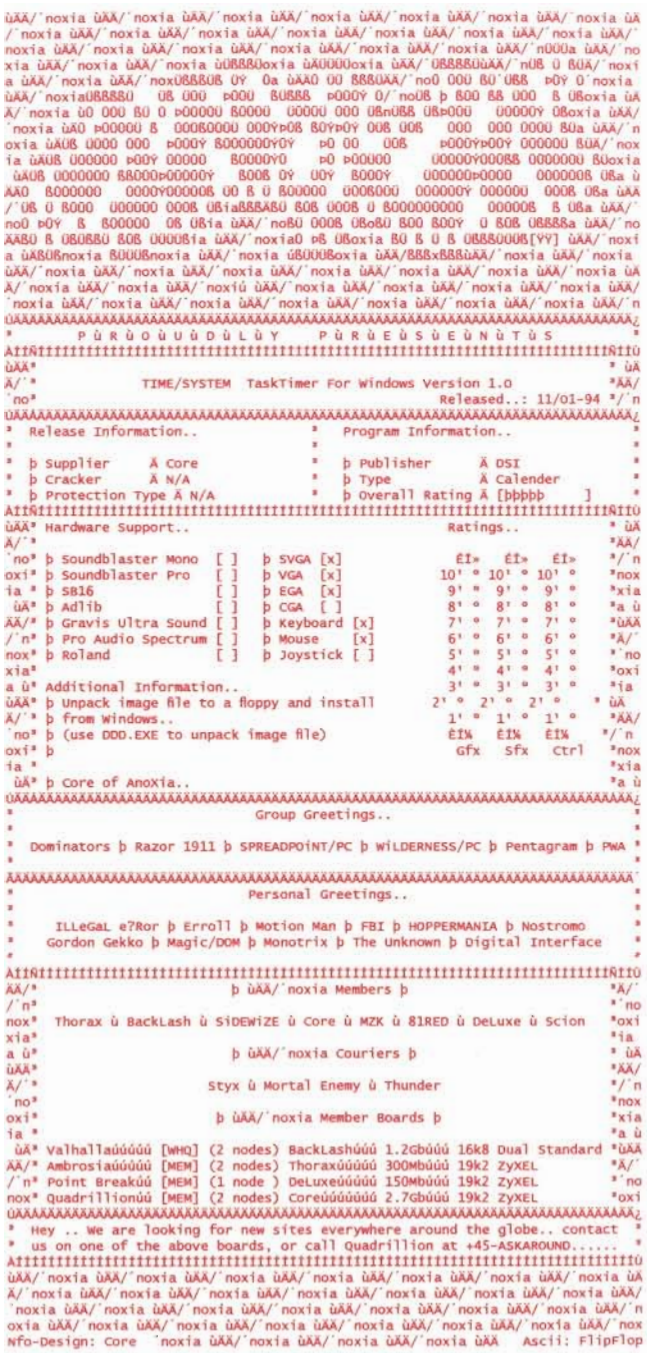
These assertions help justify criminalization and corresponding sanctions. However, The data from our research do not support these judgments for several reasons. First, software pirates make a clear distinction between "pirates," persons who collect and share software for as hobbyists akin to stamp collectors, and "bootleggers." Bootleggers are persons who distribute software for material gain. Pirates may copy and install programs, but generally their goal is to collect, and they derive satisfaction from running programs for which they have no need and that they will rarely, if ever, use.

Second, software pirates - despite the claims of the SPA (Software Publishsers Association) - report spending considerably more money purchasing software than the average user. Many of these purchases are for trading, and there is a strong ethos in the pirate world that if one uses a program, one purchases it. Reasons for purchasing include documentation, acquiring information about and discounts on updates, and on-line technical support. It is quite common for pirates to purchase identical programs to those they have already obtained.

Third, the "no return" policy of most software merchandisers makes it difficult for potential buyers to assess the ability of a program to meet their needs or work adequately on their system. Piracy creates an informed public by assuring that programs are available for pre-testing, by providing a pool of reasonably literate users to publicly discuss the merits of competing products, and to even offer technical assistance to those who have purchased a program. In this sense, the "unauthorized" copying of software can be seen as contributing to the university mission of expanding knowledge, of preventing exploitation of consumers, and above all, to the expansion of computer literacy contributing to the free flow of information.

Fourth, pirates spend a considerable sum on their hobby. Among the most active topics of discussion among pirates are those of the need to endlessly upgrade, the endless purchase of diskettes on which to store programs, and - with the popularity of 9600 baud modems - the advantages of investing between $600-900 for expanding telecommunications hardware. Because most pirates exchange software across telephone lines, piracy has benefitted telephone companies because of the growth of Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs). Our data indicate that an average monthly phone bill of $200 or more is common, and active pirates easily double that cost.

Fifth, there is simply no evidence to corroborate the claim that piracy deprives authors of revenue. Our data suggest that pirates annually purchase no less than three times the 1.5 programs the SPA estimates for the "average" user, purchases directly related to the hobby rather than a need. Further, few students or faculty could afford the price of Dbase 4 and other large programs, and few people could afford to spend several thousand dollars a year on computer games. Traded programs would simply remain unpurchased. Because piracy creates an interest in software, expands consumer literacy, and contributes to a "user culture" that benefits the industry as a whole, we suggest that without such a culture there would be less interest in software and, consequently, less revenue for authors.



Sixth, the claim that piracy is unethical is usually a glib one made without a strong rationale. Although we make no metaphysical claims here, we do suggest that the appeal to ethic in attempts to criminalize piracy is far too serious to be so glibly asserted, and the underlying issues require far more research and debate. Even in the debates over VCR reproduction and photocopying books or journal articles, the appeal to ethics was never adduced as stridently and self-righteously as in discussions of software piracy.

The rapid growth of computer and telecommunications technology brings with it new ethical, legal, and practical questions of the nature of "private property," free and open access to information and resources, and definitions of "authorship." Few among us condone any form of predatory behavior. However, we find equally disturbing the tendency to assumptively assert claims and definitions that rightly should be brought into a public forum for debate rather. The University has the obligation to protect the law, but it also has an equal obligation to do so responsibly without contributing to the current hysteria surrounding alleged "computer crime."

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The preceding article is from the Computer Underground Digest Issue #1.03 / File 5 of 6 available on USENET, BITNET, Compuserve, and various other interesting places.

Gordon and I wrote the following for Northern Illinois University's THE COMPUTING NEWS. It was not published for two reasons. First, despite the fact that our comments are drawn from an on-going research project, it was considered "opinionated." We were in a catch-22 situation: We were required to work within severe space constraints, and could present neither data nor other research citations, yet, we were also advised not to make the article "too scholarly" for a general audience. Second, and apparently most important, we were told that if the article were published, it would appear to violate the NIU policy, so was inappropriate. Only through the most adept feat of intellectual aerobics could such an interpretation be made, because we were then, and our article is quite explicit that, in no way opposing the policy, but only the rhetoric in which it was presented. Our goal was to debate the rhetoric, not the policy. Such a rationale strikes us as the CHILLING EFFECT that has occured because of recent hysteria surrounding alleged computer abuses, and we find it quite ironic that a University, normally the cornerstone of debate, seems to be stifling debate on this issue. So, we present it here instead.

We have seen an earlier version of this article floating around on bulletin boards, but this is the final, "official," version.

Jim Thomas / Gordon Meyer

****

Jim Thomas is an associate professor in Sociology. Gordon Meyer received his M.A. in Sociology in 1989. They are currently researching the computer underground from which the data for this note are drawn.

TOOD RELEASE

Sony Presents: Mariah Carey Screen Savers

Heres a kick ass screen saver from yours truely TOOD
I tried it on windows 3.11 but it should work on 95 also. Just unzip
all the zips into one directory and then just install it.
Peace

SPECIAL GREETINGS TO:

VON,KIT,DEATH LORD,PENTIUM,BITECRASH,ESKO,STUSSER,SATHI,THE PEP
MENTAL BLOCK,DEATHBLOW and MANY MORE...COOL PEOPLE

TOOD BBS's	SYSOP	STATUS	SPEED	NUMBER
VON'S DOMAIN	VON	WHQ	28.8	(718)YOU-WISH
			28.8	(718)RING-DOWN
				(718)RING-DOWN
DAMNATION	MAVEC	APP	14.4	(212)861-0580
HOUSE OF GAMES	MR.PERFECT	APP	28.8	(718)342-3485
				(718)RING-DOWN
				(718)RING-DOWN
PENTIUM DOMINATION	PENTIUM & SHADOW STALKER	HQ	28.8	(718)YOU-WISH
			28.8	(718)RING-DOWN
			28.8	(718)RING-DOWN

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THE EFFECTS OF PIRACY

http://www.marv.boyd.org/essay2/left.htm

Created and maintained by Marvin J. Boyd
©1997

Last updated : April 10, 1997

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WHAT IS SOFTWARE PIRACY?

Piracy is defined as the unauthorized use or reproduction of ANY copyrighted or ANY patented software--PERIOD. Yes, that Chessmaster 2000 game that your friend gave you for Microsoft Word is now pirated software. And you are now both considered pirates. You may be saying, "There is nothing wrong with copying a little game. I will never get caught and no one will ever no the difference." True, you may never get caught--then again, you may. Is it worth the risk?

Piracy is like a cancerous growth that spreads and multiplies. Your friend may now trade Microsoft Word for Lotus 1-2-3. With these two trades alone, Microsoft has lost approximately $200.00 in revenues. As a computer user, it is a necessity to know the risks and the intentions of software piracy; likewise, it is necessary to know the penalties and the intentions of software developers, software companies, and anti-piracy organizations.

WHY DO PEOPLE PIRATE SOFTWARE?

To answer this question, we must examine the different types of pirates. There are three main types: "low-end," "high-end," and couriers.

The low-end pirate trades a game or application infrequently. In many cases, low-end pirates may actually delete the software after they "preview" it. These pirates mainly trade software with their friends and do not usually utilize bulletin boards or Internet FTP Sites to quench their "pirating thirst."

The high-end pirate goes from bulletin board system to bulletin board system, to FTP site, to WEB site looking for the latest and newest software (warez). These pirates usually keep the software; they tend to download everything they see (even if they will never use it) for trading purposes. Finally, high-end pirates visit software stores only to see what's the hottest new "ware" to pirate.

The elite pirates are the couriers. They share many of the same characteristics as the high-end pirate; however, the couriers are at the top of the hierarchy. Courier groups such as Razor911, THG (The Humble Guys), and Pentagram, "release" software. These groups do not actually write the code for the programs--rather, they are more of a clearinghouse for software. These groups get the newest warez (thoughtfully termed 0 or 1 day warez) in many cases because of insiders working for the large software companies. In many cases, these couriers (and even some high-end pirates) will gain access to a company's FTP Site (like Macromedia Shockwave) to exchange software illegally! Usually companies have very large, powerful systems with large amounts of bandwidth. In essence, a pirate could store a "pirated copy" of Microsoft Office on Microsoft's own FTP site! Finally, courier groups usually own their own large FTP sites and mark each and every file that they release with an .nfo file.

Pirates break the law for many different reasons. Some do it to feel powerful and to be a part of an "elite" group. (high-end and courier) Others do it simply for economic reasons - with a new version of Microsoft Office coming out every other year, it may be impossible to keep paying outrageous software costs. Some may have the money but do not feel that paying for software is a worthy use of capital. Many pirates (they may not classify themselves as a pirate) copy software illegally simply because they feel that they are doing nothing wrong - they may be ignorant of the law or they may feel that Bill Gates (Mr. Geek) does not need an extra set of gold utensils.

Finally, some may truly be "trying" software before they actually but it; however, many companies are now releasing 90 Day Evaluations which eventually expire.

WHAT ARE THE "DOS" AND "DONTS" OF PIRACY? (In the eyes of a pirate)

It would be impossible to discuss the complete history of piracy, the culture, and all of the techniques used in one essay, so I have included a typical "DO" and "DON'T DO" list for most "high-enders" and couriers.

1911

Razor 1911 CD Division Proudly Presents:

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo Windows 95 Edition
(c) Windscape

Supplied By : The Undertaker
Cracked By : none

Release Date : 08 February 1996
Protection Type : n/a

Game Format : Board Game
Packed By : Pharaoh

System Type : Windows 95
Install Method : Unarj & Setup

Game Notes

This is the Windows 95 Enhanced Edition of the classic Chess game, Chessmaster 4000. This game is practically the same as the original version, but with the added speed and graphics drivers for Windows 95.

Greetz go out to : The Undertaker, The Speed Racer, The Gecko, Pharaoh, Third Son, Hot Tuna, Maverick, MOD, Beowulf, Faceless, Bitecrash, Manhunter, Luck, Tiger, Nytemyst, Dxfer, Hellraiser, Jimmy Jamez, TKLP, White Cracker, Tyrus Sithius, Egoistic Fate, and Jester King!

Group Greetz : DoD, PWA, Malice, Bladerunners, and ACID !

PHARAOH / RAZOR 1911

Razor 1911 News & Announcements

Razor shirt update:

These popular shirts are still available. See RZRSHIRT.TXT for more details.

Razor Commemorative CD update:

The Razor 10th Anniversary CD's full game list is now available, See RZRCDROM.TXT (incl. in this release) for the entire listing. The games on the CD will be fully cracked and 100% working, and it will be made up of the best games cracked and released by the Razor team since its inception in the PC scene. The CD will come with special packaging and Razor logos, so if you're collector, don't pass this one up. Send it your form now, to reserve your own copy.

The Gods at Razor CD Are:

Bitecrash. Beowulf. Cameron Hodge. Catbones. Cobra.
Egoistic Fate. Faceless. The GEcko. Hojoe. Hot Tuna. Manhunter.
Maverick. Mod. Night Vision. Ninja Spirit. Pest. Pharaoh.
Raistlin. Raw Liquid. Shadow Master. Sector9. Snake. Spectre. Sternone.
The Speed Racer. Third Son. The Undertaker. White Cracker.

Razor CD: Art Division

Director : Catbones

Razor CD: Director(s) of Courier Operations

U.S. - Bitecrash
Euro. - Manhunter

Razor CD: The Elites of the Trading Scene

Artur. Beast. Captain Blood. Dxfer. Fatal Error. Flint.
Luck. Maverick. Nytemyst. Stoney. Suspicious Image.
Syxus. Techno Rave. Tiger. Toast. Turok.

DOs

DO make copies from original disks, and be sure to put the version of the product in the description.

DO put "read me" tips in the first disk if there's a trick to getting a program working.

DO put up complete files, NOT partial files, and label them as they are on the disk.

DO put in the file description whether the program is cracked or uncracked

DO read the message section of the boards, and contribute when you can. Don't be afraid to ask dumb questions.

DO make sure you have sufficient space on your hard drive or disks when downloading a large file.

This may sound silly, but it's not unusual especially for novices to forget space and botch a download.

DO make sure to describe whether a program you uploaded has special requirements (mouse, math co-processor).

DO keep up on protocols... use the fastest available. Using Xmodem is a sure sign of a lamer.

DO read the bulletins and check to be sure the board doesn't already have a copy of what you are uploading.

DO use zip comments to specify what a disk is.

DON'Ts

DON'T whine and swear at the sysop. You get on a board and get more access as you prove yourself deserving.

DON'T upload .gif files and other programs that are a dime a dozen and of little use. Upload what you would like to receive.

DON'T start changing handles for every board. Most BBSers are known by one handle, and change only if there is a good reason to.

DON'T phreak to a pirate board. It draws attention to the board and makes life miserable for everybody.

DON'T logoff prematurely. Use the board's logoff command.

DON'T change the names of a file just to get upload credit. This is a sure way to get kicked off any board.

DON'T start flaming other users. Pirate boards are SHARE boards, and most users would rather read some good tips and not engage in petty arguments.

DON'T upload faulty files or incomplete files. Be sure it's all there. If it isn't, at least indicate that in the file description.

DON'T blame the sysop for faulty files until you have at least tried leaving messages for help.

DON'T log on just to look around...upload or post something. If you don't SHARE, you're taking time away from other users.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

In 1964, the United States Copyright Office began to register software as a form of literary expression. The Copyright Act was amended in 1980 to include computer programs. Today, according to Title 17 of the United States Code, it is illegal to make or distribute copies of copyrighted material without authorization. The only exception is the user's right to make a single backup copy. In 1990 Congress approved the Software Rental Amendments Act which prohibits the commercial rental, leasing, or lending of software without the express written permission of the copyright holder. Individuals may possess the original software program and one backup copy of the software for their personal use. No other copies may be made without specific authorization from the copyright owner.

WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES?

In late 1992, Congress passed an amendment to Title 18, United States Code, instituting criminal penalties for copyright infringement of software. The penalties include imprisonment of up to five years, fines up to $250,000, or both, for the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of 10 or more copies of software with a total retail value

United States law prohibits duplicating software for profit, making multiple copies for use by different users within an organization, and giving an unauthorized copy to another individual. If caught with pirated software, you or your company may be tried under both civil and criminal law.

A civil action may be instituted for injunction, actual damages (including infringer's profits), or statutory damages up to $100,000 per infringement. Criminal penalties for copyright infringement include fines up to $250,000 and jail terms up to five years, or both.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH PIRATED SOFTWARE?

When a user downloads (or trades) an illegal copy of a software program, they risk: viruses, corrupt disks, inadequate documentation (although software piracy groups, or courier groups usually include an "nfo" file describing and rating the pirated software), lack of technical product support, and lack of software upgrades offered to registered users.

OK, I AM WILLING TO TAKE THE ABOVE RISKS TO AVOID ADDING TO MR. GEEK'S BILLIONS...

When you pirate or use counterfeited software, you are not only putting yourself at risk but you are denying the software developer his or her rightful revenue. In addition, you harm the industry as a whole. All software developers both big and small, spend literally years developing software for public use. A portion of every dollar spent in purchasing original software is funneled back into research and development so that better, more advanced software can be produced. When you pirate software, the company that developed it never sees a dime. Thus, in many cases, companies are forced to raise prices to make up for lost revenue.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A USER?

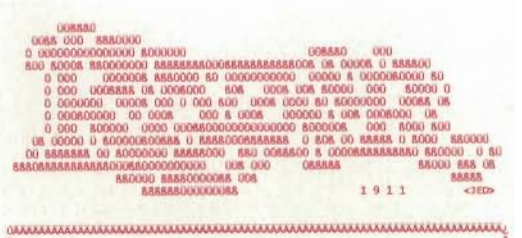
Your first responsibility as a software user is to purchase original programs only for your use. If you purchase software for business use, every computer at your place of business must have its own set of original software and the appropriate number of manuals. It is illegal to purchase a single set of original software to load onto more than one computer or to lend, copy or distribute software for any reason without the prior written consent of the software manufacturer.

WHO IS HELPING THE SITUATION?

The United States Government has been an active participant in protecting the rights of copyright owners. When the Software Publishers Association (SPA) conducts a raid, Federal Marshals or local law enforcement officers also participate. Federal Judges have shown their intolerance of copyright violators by handing down increasingly large damage awards against infringers. In addition, software companies have setup their own anti-piracy departments (You can call 1-800-RULEGIT and report cases involving the piracy of a Microsoft Product) to catch criminals. In essence, you may trade a game with your friend today, but he may turn you in tomorrow.

IN CLOSING...

Software companies put millions into development each year. Piracy causes companies to lose money and denies software authors the compensation that they deserve. Of course it is cheaper (and sometimes easier) to download or trade a program than driving to the store and purchasing it. When you pirate software you are cheating companies, putting software authors out of work, and putting yourself at risk for imprisonment.



Razor 1911 CD Division Proudly Presents:

Commodore 64 Pack
(c) Activision

Supplied By : Spectre
Cracked By : --
Release Date : 15 December 1995
Protection Type : none found

Game Format : full CD
Packed By : The GEcko
System Type : WIN 95
Install Method : INSTALL.EXE

Game Notes

Activision decides to bring back some of it's favorites from the old Commodore 64 days, and we, here at Razor, are happy to bring them for you. The classics include: Decathlon, Hackers, Little Computer People, Fuel Eliminator, Alcazar, Portal, Beamrider, Toy Bizarre, Zone Ranger, Rock N' Bolt, Park Patrol, Web Dimension, Master of the Lamps, and Great American Cross-Country Road Race. Unlike the Atari packs, this one will only work with WIN 95, so if you still have 3.1, forget about it.

(To Activision - let's see an Apple II Pack from you guys!)

Crack and Install Info

The entire CD is here, nothing was ripped out. To install, just unzip the files into a temp directory and run the Razor INSTALL. Don't forget to type/click LAUNCHER to start the game. Special thanks to Spectre for bagging another one from Activision, and major kudos to Faceless for checking the game at 3 AM!

The GEcko / RazoR 1911

Razor 1911 News & Announcements

We welcome Lester, Nero, and Viper Krynn to the spreading team!

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Razor shirt update:

Alot of you out there are still asking for the Razor shirts, and we want you to know that they are still available. Just look for the RZRSHIRT.TXT in our releases.

Razor Commemorative CD update:

The Razor 10th Anniversary CD's full game list is now available, see RZRCDROM.TXT (incl, in this release) for the entire listing. The games on the CD will be fully cracked and 100% working, and it will be made up of the best games cracked and released by the Razor team since its inception in the PC scene. The CD will come with special packaging and Razor logos, so if you're collector, don't pass this one up. Send it your form now, to reserve your own copy.

Razor 1911 Seasons Greetings

Pharaoh - your metals are coming...;)
Speedo - ask Santa to bing you a Mustang for X-mas!
Hot Tuna - Supply God 1911
Third Son - Razor's number 1 CD butcher...:)
Faceless - How's those cookies..yum..yum.
Mod - Crack God 1911
Druidkin - say hi to your ball and chain for us.
Shadow Master - get a real modem and PC...8A)
Ninja Spirit - get more phone lines!

Bitecrash, Viper Krynn, Sternone, and da rest of the Razor family and friends around the globe!

The Gods at Razor CD Are:

Artic Cat. Beowulf. Cameron Hodge. Cobra. CyberPhreak. Druidkin. Dr. Detergent. Faceless. Fatal Error. The GEcko. Gilby. Hojoe. Hot Tuna. Hula. Jock Rockwell. Kilroy. Maverick. Mod. Ninja Spirit Pharaoh. Pitbull. Raw Liquid. Shadow Master. Sector9. Snake. Spectre. Sternone. The Speed Racer. Third Son. The Undertaker and Wolverine!

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WAREZ WARS

For the Inner Circle, cracking software is a challenge. For the wannabe underground, collecting it is an obsession. For the software industry, it's a billion-dollar nightmare.

By David McCandless,

Wired Magazine Issue 5.04 - April 1997

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Sunday morning, 7 a.m., somewhere in US Eastern Standard Time: Mad Hatter gets up, has a glass of Seagram's Ginger Ale and a cigarette, and checks his machine, which has been running automated scripts all night. He looks for errors and then reads his e mail. He has 30 messages from all over the world: some fan mail, a couple of flames, a few snippets of interesting information, three or four requests - some clear, some PGP-encoded. After a quick espresso and another cigarette, he surveys the contents of a few private FTP sites, filters through a bunch of new files, and then reroutes the good stuff to his newsreader. After breakfast with the family, another wave of automated scripts kicks in. The ISDN connection hums to life. A steady stream of bytes departs his machine at 128 Kbps and vanishes into the ether. By the end of the day Mad Hatter, a ringleader of the software piracy group called the Inner Circle, will have poured 300 Mbytes of illegal "warez" onto the Internet.

Monday morning, 9 a.m., Greenwich Mean Time: Phil arrives for work in Bracknell, England, in a suit and tie, just back from a few days in Switzerland. Inside Novell UK's glossy five-story headquarters, he lets himself into his office. It looks like a mad, bad bedroom - shiny desktops and derelict ones, disemboweled minitowers and battered servers, every last expansion slot distended with DAT machines, CD-ROM burners, extra hard drives.

A metal shelf unit contains a rack of monitors, some video equipment, spare keyboards. Everything is wired insanely to a single ISDN line. After a coffee, Phil boots up and skims his email. Twenty minutes later he has ceased to be Phil. For the next week, he will pretend to be a trader, a courier, a cracker, a newbie, a lamer, a lurker, a leecher. He is an undercover Internet detective, a "technical investigator." He spends his days roving the Net, finding people like Mad Hatter - and busting them.

This is a story about a universe with two parallel, overlapping worlds. One is the familiar, dull world of the software industry, with its development costs, marketing teams, profit, and loss. Phil's world, at least part of the day.

And then there is warez world, the Mad Hatter's world, a strange place of IRC channels and Usenet groups, of thrills, prestige, and fear. A world of expert crackers who strip the protection from expensive new software and upload copies onto the Net within days of its release. A world of wannabes and collectors, whose hard drives are stuffed like stamp albums, with programs they'll never use. And a world of profit pirates, who do exactly what the software makers say: rip off other people's stuff and sell it for their own benefit.

In Phil's world, software is a valuable tool that commands high prices - programs like QuarkXPress, Windows NT, and AutoCAD, costing thousands of dollars a shot. But in Mad Hatter's world, those sticker prices means nothing - except inasmuch as more expensive programs are harder to crack, and that makes them the most desirable, spectacular trophies of all.

In Phil's world, warez are a menace. In warez world, Phil is. Filthy lucre Phil's world is full of nasty numbers. Anti-piracy organizations like the Software Publishers Association and Business Software Alliance estimate that more than US$5 million worth of software is cracked and uploaded daily to the Net, where anyone can download it free of charge. A running scoreboard on the BSA Web site charts the industry's losses to piracy: $482 a second, $28,900 a minute, $1.7 million an hour, $41.6 million a day, $291.5 million a week. A lot of that is garden-variety unlicensed copying and Far East-style counterfeiting. But an estimated one-third leaks out through warez world, which can be anywhere there's a computer, a phone, and a modem.

This is bad news for the business. Think of the lost revenue! The lost customers! "It's a frightening scenario out there," says Martin Smith, Novell's product-licensing manager for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. "We are seeing a very, very rapid development of crime on the Internet."

He's not being paranoid: look at the thousands of messages that pour through alt.binaries.warez.ibm-pc and the other Usenet sites that are the warez world's pulsing heart. In a typical week, you'll see Microsoft Office Pro and Visual C++, Autodesk 3D Studio MAX, SoftImage 3D, SoundForge, Cakewalk Pro Audio, WordPerfect, Adobe Photoshop 4.0 - virtually every high-end package in existence. All this plus impossibly early betas and alphas. Add a smattering of mundane Web tools, Net apps, registered shareware, games, and utilities, and you have everything for the forward-looking computer user.

Warez world's volumes are impressive, too - a good 65 Mbytes a day of freshly cracked, quality new releases, chopped into disk-sized portions (to make it from one hop to the next without clogging the servers), compressed, and uploaded. Postings can vary from a few bytes (for a crack) to hundreds of megabytes. The nine main warez sites alone account for 30 to 40 percent of the traffic on Usenet, an average of more than 500 Mbytes in downloads every 24 hours, according to OpNet.

Bad news indeed for Phil and his friends, gazing at those endless dollar signs. But warez world's leading citizens say that filthy lucre is beside the point - at least for them and the hungry collectors they supply.

"No money ever exchanges hands in our forum," says California Red, one of a half dozen of the Mad Hatter's Inner Circle colleagues gathered for an IRC chat. "We're on the nonprofit side of the warez feeding chain," insists another, TAG (The Analog Guy). "It's a trade. You give what you have, get something you need. No money needed," adds Clickety. "We're not in it for the money. I would never sell something I got from warez," California Red reiterates. "Never made a dime," says Mad Hatter.

Even Phil admits these are not the people responsible - not directly, anyhow - for the 500-Mbyte, $50 bundled software CD-ROMs from Asia that are the industry's most prominent nightmare. Warez crackers, traders, and collectors don't pirate software to make a living: they pirate software because they can.

The more the manufacturers harden a product, with tricky serial numbers and anti-copy systems, the more fun it becomes to break. Theft? No: it's a game, a pissing contest; a bunch of dicks and a ruler. It's a hobby, an act of bloodless terrorism. It's "Fuck you, Microsoft." It's about having something the other guy doesn't. It's about telling him that you have something he doesn't and forcing him to trade something he has for something you don't. In other words, it's an addiction.

Listen to a typical dialog on an IRC warez trading channel:

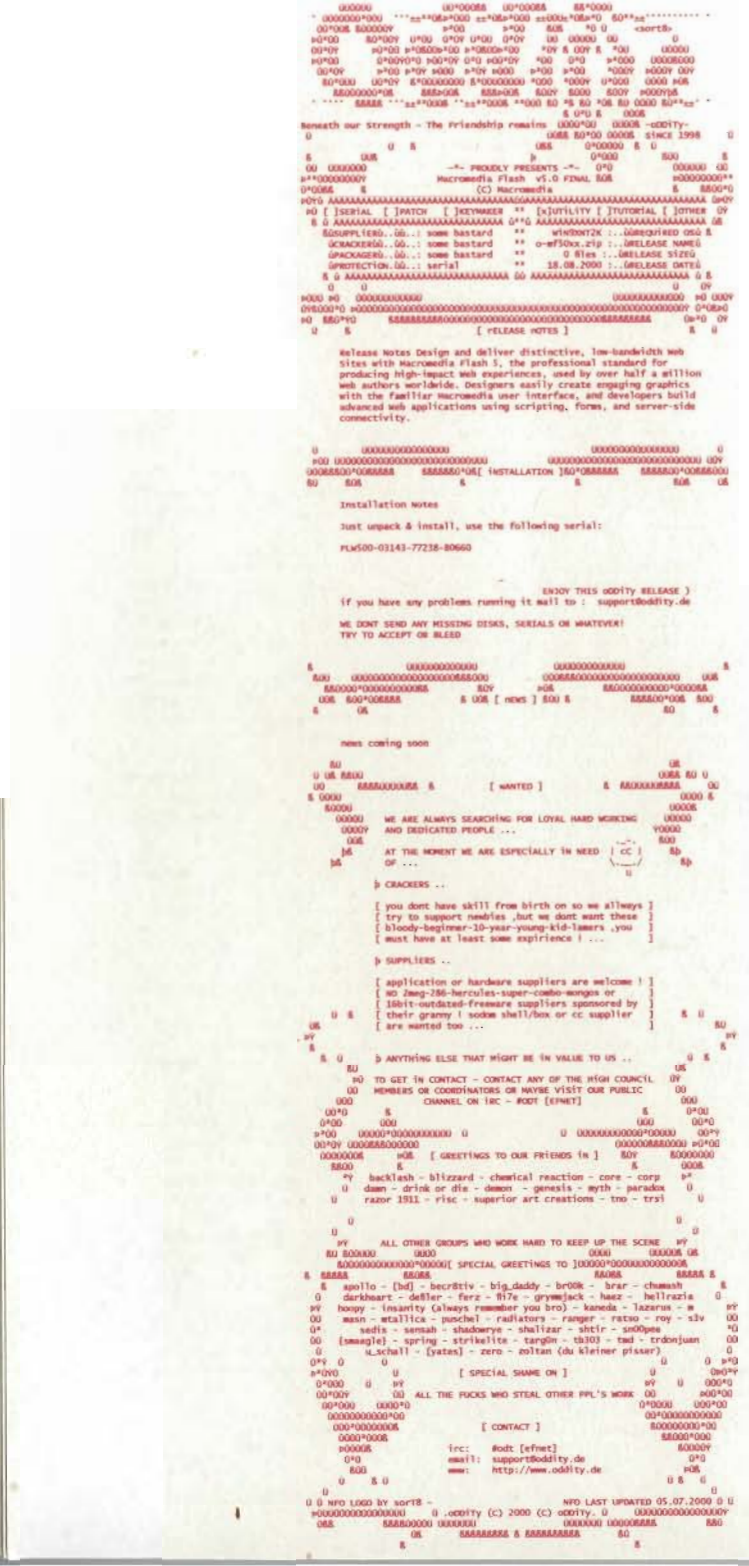
"What you got?"
"Cubase three."
"What's that?"
"A music program."
"I got it. What else?"
"No, but it's Cubase three-oh-three - the latest bugfix."
"Shit. Gimme."
"It's not a patch. It's another seven meg download."
"Don't care. I want it."

Warez traders scour the newsgroups every night, planting requests, downloading file parts they don't need. Warezheads feel unfulfilled unless they've swelled their coffers by at least one application a day. They don't need this Java Development Kit tool, or that Photoshop plug-in - the thrill is in creating the new subdirectory and placing the tightly packed and zipped file cleanly, reverently, into the collection. They may even install it. Then toy absentmindedly with its toolbars and palettes before tucking it away and never running it again.

Look at Michael, an 18-year-old warez junkie who's also into weight lifting. In the evenings, while his friends pursue women, he's either at the gym or home at his machine, combing the planet for the latest dot releases of 3D Studio MAX. "I bought a Zip drive so I could store it all. The SoftImage rip is 20 disks. It took me three months to get the entire set." A directory called WAREZ on his D:/ drive has $50,000 worth of cracked software, more than any one person could ever use, ludicrous amounts of applications. The more high-end and toolbar-tastic the app, the better. Without technical support or manuals, he hasn't a clue how to use most of it. But it's there and will stay there. "Warez give you a weird kind of feeling," he says. "You end up collecting programs you don't need and never use. Just so you can say, 'I've got this or I've got that.' Or 'My version of Photoshop is higher than yours.'"

Mad Hatter knows the feeling. "It's an obsessive game. We see it every day - people begging for something to 'finish their collection.'" He's not much better himself. "When I was out of work on disability, I was totally motivated by the thrill of massive uploads, uploading at least 40 Mbytes a day for four months straight." Fellow Inner Circle member Clickety used to spend 12 hours a day online until college got "awful heavy." Another, Abraxas, spends 6 to 10 hours online on weekdays, 12 to 16 on weekends . But Mad Hatter - who runs the semi-tongue-in-cheek, semi-poker-faced discussion group alt.support.warez.recovery - is making progress: he's down to 30 Mbytes a day.

"My computer is online 24 hours a day," he says. "A warez pirate is always online."



AS GODS

For Joe Warez Addict at the end of the cracked software food chain, membership in a group like the Inner Circle is the ultimate collectible. A way to legitimize their addiction, work for the common good, and, of course, get a nice fresh supply of warez. T he drug addict becomes dealer. A sizable chunk of Mad Hatter's daily mail is begging letters: "I hope that if I ask this question, you will not be offended in any way. But can I join the Inner Circle? I mean, I respect the Inner Circle ... but never got a chance to join it. I was just wondering, can I? Please mail me back ASAP."

Needless to say, this lone obsessive didn't get his chance. Joining the Inner Circle is high on impossible. Reaching its members, though, is easy enough. They keep a high profile, both in posting files on Usenet and flaming lamers. When I first tried to contact them I thought that they weren't so good at answering email, but it turned out their provider had just been taken offline for illegal spamming. They relocated en masse, and my mail had been lost in transit. So I posted a message to one of their newsgroups, made sure it was correctly labeled, politely worded, and not crossposted (a cardinal sin anywhere on Usenet). A reply arrived within eight hours. Mad Hatter was more than happy to talk, but not on the phone, not in person, and not on conventional IRC. "It has a bit of a habit of advertising my IP address," he said. He and six other Inner Circle members set up their own IRC server, configured a secret channel, and arranged a mutually convenient time for a live interview. We met and talked for nine hours, in the bizarre overlapping conversational style of IRC. They were frank and open, friendly and articulate - and, like any new start-up, flattered by the attention.

A 17-strong force, the Inner Circle has its own iconography and its own ideals. Its members are warez gods. They preach, police, advise, flame. Their commandments? Good manners, good use of bandwidth, and good warez. Give unto others as you would have them give unto you. When the Inner Circle is not sourcing warez from secret sites, its members are hunting and gathering from more conventional sources. Clickety borrows fresh stuff from his clients. A few have attended Microsoft Solution seminars. "Some of us are actual beta testers, too," says Mad Hatter. "That's got to be scary for the developers."

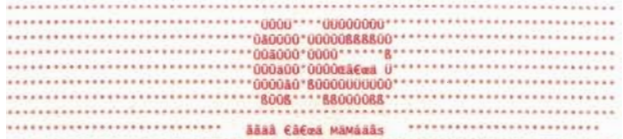
One way or another, they help maintain the steady flow of warez onto Usenet. From there, various wannabes, lamers, and aspirants copy their work to countless BBSes, FTP sites, and Web pages.

These are not pimply teenagers devoid of social life and graces, little ferrets who talk in bIFF text and make napalm out of soap and lightbulbs; they're not downloading porn or being careful not to wake their parents or spelling "cool" as "kewl." According to the interviews I conducted, not one member is younger than 20; Clickety-Clack is the youngest at 23. Most are 30-plus. Champion uploader Digital has been happily married for 22 of his 46 years. Most are well-adjusted white males with day jobs and thoroughly nuclear families. Founding member Abraxas has three kids, one over 18. Mad Hatter runs a small business from home. Technical guru TAG is a computer animator. Irrelevant maintains commercial real estate. They're spread all over the United States. A few are concentrated around Orlando, Florida. Two or three others are California-based. For obvious reasons, that's as precise as they like to get.

The Inner Circle was born of a sense of outrage that their beloved pirate-wares newsgroups were going to pot. Warez had been around for more than a decade, but the growth of the Internet was bringing clueless newbies onto the boards. Warez needed a code of ethics and a group of leaders to set some examples. The leaders would be the best crackers - some of whom became the Inner Circle.

"We took over alt.binaries.pictures.leek in early '96," explains Abraxas, "and then leaked the first Nashville [Windows 97] beta. The groups were being overrun by clueless people. They needed help. They were wasting Internet resources. Perhaps if we could encourage responsible use of the available bandwidth, the whole Usenet warez 'scene' might last a while longer. Warez was around before we were, and will be after, but we wanted to help people and preserve resources using common sense."

As enforcers of the warez code, the Inner Circle can be swift and sure. In April 1996, a pirate gang called Nomad, convinced that posts to warez groups were being suppressed, decided to get themselves some unsupervised elbow room. They selected an anti work newsgroup - alt.binaries.slack, relatively empty and off the beaten track - where software could be slipped past news providers who had firewalled the usual warez forums. Within 24 hours, the forum was flooded with the latest releases. The slackers bestirred themselves from their apathy and fought back, posting files that told the pirates politely to push off. The warez kept coming. Then the Inner Circle waded in on the slackers' side and castigated the invaders for their poor manners. The pirates left meekly - though as a parting gift, one of them posted Microsoft NT, Beta 3, all 48 Mbytes of it, in 5,734 parts. The slackers' newsfeed was clogged for days.



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Asuryan	Burn-Out Mode	Nueromage
August West	Chronic	Perseus
Backlash	Eclipse	Phoenix
Big Mikey	Hemispheres	Rowermonger
Budman	Mission Control	Radar
Buster Hymen	Planet Gramarye	Reich
Chuckles	Purgatory	Rob U. Blind
City Hunter	Sanctuary	Shady
Dark Shadow	Shadow World	Slade
Darksider	Sharewares	Slick Willard
Doctor Jones	Sysop's 'r Us	Software Junky
Dr Pepper	The Brewery	The Mustang
Gallowglass	The Cove	Threshold
Hardcase	The Ouija Board	Walter Mitty
John Doe	The Warez Shack	Waverunner
Koufax	VTEC	

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                Form Flow v1.1 for Windows [8 Disks]
                Electonic Form Software from DELRINA.

 Supplied by The Driving Cat                          Packaged by Toonces
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Greets go out to our newest courier/member, Slick Willard. He is gonna help spread our stuff to the other side of the country and hopefully he will send a little back this way....welcome aboard dude...

Mitty -ic-

Thank You for calling this inner circle BBS.

By unzipping this file, you declare that you agree to abide by all the copywrite laws of the United States, And also declare that you are not affiliated with nor report to ANY Government, Law Enforcement or Private Security Agency, Software Company, or agent thereof. This software is provided free of charge, by this non-profit library for non-profit purposes, as provided for in TITLE 17 of the U.S. Copyright law. The check-out period is 24 hours, starting NOW, after which it must be purchased or erased. SUPPORT THE INDUSTRY. They eat too. ANY OTHER USE CONSTITUTES FRAUD AND CRIMINAL TRESSPASS!!

Inner Circle is a non-profit organization. We only want to share. If you can help, upload this file to every BBS you call. Simple. No Politics. We thank all those who have come before us, and have inspired us to pool our rescources and do our share to enhance the quality of the BBS scene today. This is the 90's. We have arrived. =)

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A slightly disturbing revelation came out of the slacker invasion. "After the first attempted takeover, we discovered just how scary search engines like Deja News and AltaVista were," explains TAG. "You could dig up real email addresses pretty easy on about 75 percent of people posting warez." A worried TAG hacked into the code of Forte Agent, an industry standard newsreader already cracked to bypass the shareware cripples, and stripped away the X-newsreader header, giving posters far greater anonymity. As a side effect, the patch also reduced email spams by two-thirds. "The hack went over so well with even non-warez people that Forte eventually incorporated it into Agent as a feature," TAG says proudly, "although I don't think they'll be giving us credit."

By mid-'96, Mad Hatter decided that police work was getting to be too much of a chore. The news feed was being clogged by lamers, requesters, and partials posters with "room-temperature IQs." Those genuinely into warez were seeing less and less complete software uploaded; in its place were hundreds of stray disks and clammy begging posts. In a rare fit of pique, Mad Hatter took his revenge.

"If I continue to see the 'here's what I have' threads," he wrote, "I will stop uploading here. I will not help and will laugh my ass off that everyone is suffering. If for some reason you doubt that I make a difference, it's your loss, as I personally have uploaded 85 percent of all the shit that's getting posted now when it was zero day or still fresh. Keep fighting over stale shit - I like to watch; keep posting partials, and I'll stop upping my 100 to 300 Mbytes a week. In fact, I think I'll stop now. "

And stop the Inner Circle did. "We became burnt out on educating the masses," Mad Hatter says. Instead, a range of guaranteed lamer-free encrypted newsgroups was created for posting PGP-encoded warez, for Inner Circle approved members only. Those on the select interested-parties list are given the codes to unlock the software, and anyone can apply to join.

Requirement: a reasonable knowledge of PGP. "Hopefully this is a sign you won't be totally incompetent if you choose to post," says TAG. At the last count, the IPL had 500 subscribers, happily trading warez under the protection of the latest in anti-lamer technology.

NEW ECONOMY

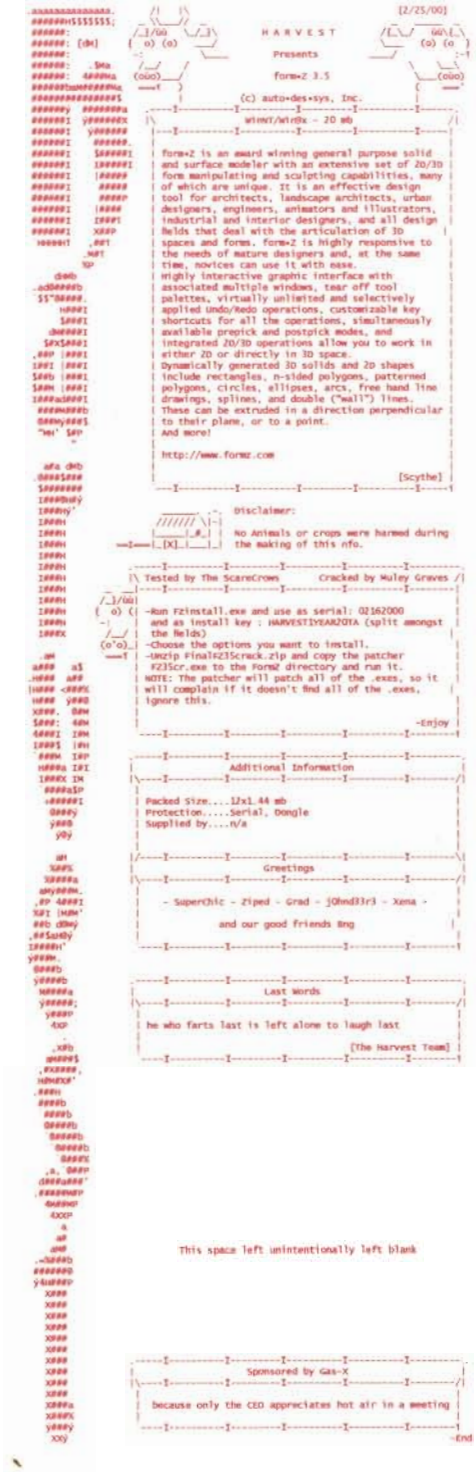
Warez on Usenet are basically gifts - testimony to the power and stature of the giver. Files are posted for all to download, free. Just fire up your newsreader, point it at an appropriate forum, and a list like a home-shopping catalog of the latest software spills down your screen. There is no pressure, but if you download and you like the vibe, you are expected to join the community and contribute uploads whenever possible.

On the freewheeling IRC chat forums, warez are no longer gifts - they're trade goods. The rewards are greater, but you've got to work for them. The IRC channels are 24-hour stock exchanges cum street markets: FreeWarez, Warez96, Warez4Free, WarezSitez, WarezAppz, and WarezGamez. There are private channels, hidden areas, and invite-only piracy parties. And there are no free lunches - every piece of software has to be paid for, in software. The more recent the application, the higher its value. The ultimate bartering tools are zero-day warez - software released by a commercial house in the last 24 hours, cracked if necessary and uploaded. The prizes for good zero-day warez vary; you may get instant download status on a particular server, logins and password s for exclusive FTP sites, or admission to the ranks of a powerful cartel like the Inner Circle.

"Zero-day sites are very élite stuff," explains paid-up élitist TAG. "People can get access only if they can move a few hundred Mbytes a day. Most are invite only. The average IRC warez trader doesn't get that kind of access unless he puts a lot of effort into it." Zero-day warez trading is a fraught business; competition between groups often leads to malpractice. "You get a lot of first releases with bad cracks," says TAG, "just so someone can say they released first. Then two days later, you get a working crack. We get most of our freshest stuff from private FTP and courier drop sites."

If your software collection is more mundane, you can trade one piece directly for another. But with so many unpoliced egos in one place, this can be risky. People will often welsh on deals, allowing you to pass them a file and then disappearing into the ether. Cunning traders will barter with "trojans" - zipped-up files of gunk, realistic enough to carry out half the transaction. In extreme cases, someone may feed you a virus.

A step down from zero-day warez are drop sites, where fresh cracks can be found for the cost of a download. Some drop sites run on the trader's own machine; others piggyback on government or corporate mainframes, shareware mirrors, and university networks. Often they're only in existence for 24 hours, or on weekends when the sysops are at home. Wherever you end up, you'll be struck by the extreme politesse and measured courtesy, united by a common language. "Greets m8. Have appz, gamez and crackz on 129.102.1.3. Looking for Pshop 4.0 beta. L8ter." "Have 1.5 gigs of warez on anonymous T1. Upload for leech



access. /msg me for more info. No lamers."
REAL MONEY

Back in Phil's world, they can't quite cope with the idea of this ferocious brag-driven barter economy cloaked in courtesy. The SPA and the BSA just don't believe it. "Considering the amount of time they dedicate, they must be making a return to justify it," says Phil.

Casual observers of the BSA's Web site may well be convinced, if only because they're stunned by the money that's involved - or seems to be. Fifteen point five billion dollars a year! But those figures are based on the assumption that if piracy were stopped, someone would be willing to pay for every pirated copy in circulation.

"Billions of dollars?" scoffs East London BBS operator Time Bandit. "I know guys who have thousands and thousands of pounds worth of software, but the values are meaningless. Win95 may cost, like, £75 in the shops, but in warez, it's worthless. It's just another file that you might swap for another program, which might cost four grand. How much it costs in real money is meaningless."

How do you ram home sales figures and quarterly losses to a bunch of teenagers who see warez trading as their passport to acceptance on the scurrilous side of a brave new world? How do you convince middle-aged men who see incandescently expensive software as monopoly money in a vast, global boardgame that what they're doing is "harmful"? In the software industry's latest campaign, you scare them - or try. The BSA's mandate used to be "not to capture pirates, but to eradicate piracy." Now exemplary punishment is the big thing.

To do that, the BSA and the SPA are willing to push the law to its limits. Prosecuting clear offenders - warez-vending BBS operators and FTP-site pirates, for instance - is one thing; suing ISPs for carrying Web pages containing pirate links and cracks is another. A typical case was against C2Net, a Buffalo, New York-based ISP that the SPA sued for doing just that. In what smacked of a token prosecution - or, in the words of C2Net's president, Sameer Parekh, "legal terrorism" - the action by Adobe, Claris , and Traveling Software, under the aegis of the SPA, held the provider responsible as "publishers" for the contents of its server, and for the activities of individual account holders. The SPA eventually backed off but threatens to revive the suit if C2N et and other ISPs don't agree to monitor their users for copyright infringement. C2Net says it will not give in to litigious "bullying."

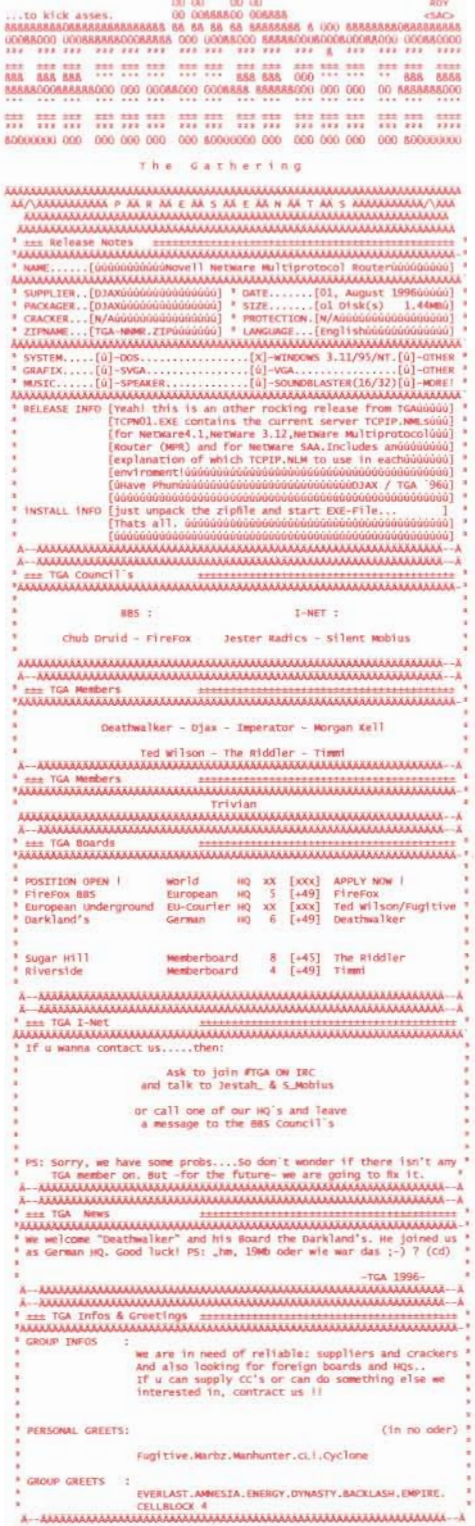
And then there are straightforward busts. On January 12, 1996, Microsoft and Novell jointly announced a settlement with Scott W. Morris, who was "doing business as the Assassin's Guild BBS ... billed ... as the worldwide headquarters for two large pirate groups, Pirates With Attitude (PWA) and Razor 1911." According to the statement, "marshals seized 13 computers, 11 modems, a satellite dish, 9 gigabytes of online data, and over 40 gigabytes of offline data storage dating back to 1992.... Mr. Morris agrees to assist Microsoft and Novell in their continuing BBS investigations."

Phil, our undercover Internet detective, wasn't responsible for that particular drama, but he's been integral to others. His latest victory was in Zürich - "a landmark case against individuals and organizations distributing unlicensed software on the Internet," he calls it. A 27-year-old computer technician who helpfully called himself "The Pirate" was running an FTP site filled to the brim with warez, including US$60,000 worth of unlicensed Novell software. Phil, impersonating a trader, infiltrated the site (admittedly no great feat), collected evidence, then handed it over to the Swiss police. He accompanied them on the raid to ensure no evidence was damaged. "He was one of a new breed who advertise on the Internet," says Phil. "He made his files available via email requests and telnet." Swiss police also raided the home of a BBS called M-E-M-O, run by "The Shadow," a friend of The Pirate. Unfortunately, The Shadow was on holiday with his parents. The family returned two weeks later to find their front door broken down; the son was arrested. If convicted, the young pirates face up to three years in jail and possible $80,000 fines.

The Pirate's mistake - aside from his suicidal choice of nickname - was to plant himself geographically. Phil, a former corporate network manager, was able to trace him through his FTP site's IP address. Phil knows his networks; this makes him the perfect undercover agent -and one of Novell UK's most envied employees. "I play on the Net all day," he says, "and get paid for it."

There's a bit more to it than that. Phil and his counterparts in Asia and the US are deployed to infiltrate pirate groups; to study IRC; to get under the skin of the lamers, the dabblers, and the professionals; to chat, seduce, charm, and interact with the denizens of this bizarre over-underworld. Phil talks to traders in their own language, understands the tricks and traps.

After busting The Pirate, he says, "We were talking and he was moaning about the sluggishness of his network. I pointed out that, aside from using LANtastic, he was using a 75-ohm terminator on the back of his file server, slowing the whole thing down."



Now that he's back from Zürich, Phil will be getting some new toys: the spoils of war. In many jurisdictions, any hardware deemed to be part of an illegal setup can be taken by investigators and - if part of a civil prosecution - can be worked in as part of the settlement. Once sucked dry of evidence and incriminating data, the cannibalized machines are moved to Bracknell and hooked up to the network. But despite the resources at his disposal and his status as a network ninja, Phil doesn't always get his man. "If there's a person out there who has a decent level of technological awareness of the ways he can be located, it's quite true to say he could successfully hide himself, or use a system where it would be impossible to track him. It's technically possible for them to bounce their messages all around the world and have us running around like blue-arsed flies." It's a reluctant admission, but then Phil is one person pitted against thousands.

Successful prosecutions aren't always that easy either. Take David LaMacchia, an MIT engineering student who turned two of the school's servers into drop sites and downloaded an estimated $1 million worth of pirated software. LaMacchia was arrested in 1995, only to have the case thrown out by a judge who ruled that no "commercial motive" was involved. Prosecutors tried charging him with wire fraud, but this was ruled an unacceptable stretching of the law. LaMacchia walked free. "Bringing Internet cases through the judicial system is a nightmare," says Novell's Martin Smith. "Try talking to a judge about 'dynamically allocated IP addresses.' we don't have a chance."

Tell that to the former warez traders of America Online, which had a meteoric history as a pirate mecca. For years, instructions on how to crack AOL's security and obtain free accounts were a Usenet staple. Online, "freewarez" chat rooms were packed with traders, 24 hours a day. Megabytes of warez were kept in permanent circulation.

Then came the crackdown of 1996, a dark period in warez history. Goaded by software-industry watchdogs, AOL introduced countermeasures to disinfect its system; alt.binaries.warez was removed from the Internet newsfeed. CATWatch automated sentinels were placed on AOL's warez chat channels, logging off anyone who entered. "Free" accounts were traced and nuked.

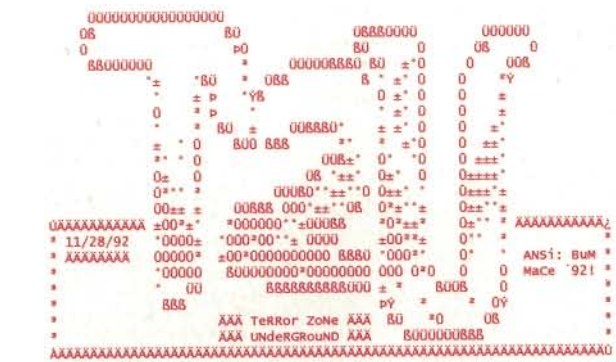
Michael, the weight-lifting trader and also an AOL veteran, says everyone thought that "the FBI had infiltrated the warez groups, and we were all going to get busted." On the cusp of the big time - a top pirate outfit named Hybrid had a position open - Michael had been hoping to prove himself by doing a CD rip of the soccer game Euro 96. "I was halfway through removing the FMV and CD audio. I reckon I could've got it down from 58 disks to 9. But then everything went haywire."

Profit-driven crackers are actually the easiest to catch: they have links to the real world, starting with the money trail from credit cards. And the easiest prey of all are BBSes, with their telltale telephone connections. In January, FBI agents led by the bureau's San Francisco-based International Computer Crime Squad raided homes and businesses in California and half a dozen other states. They seized computers, hard drives, and modems, though no arrests were made. Along with Adobe, Autodesk, and other BSA stalwarts, the list of software companies involved included Sega and Sony - a hint that the targets included gold-disk dupers who counterfeit mass-market videogames.

Mad Hatter was not impressed. "Wow, I'm in hiding," he cracked the day after the raids. But "Cyber Strike" was, as BSA vice president Bob Kruger said later in a statement, "the most ambitious law enforcement action to date against Internet piracy" - specifically, the first US case in which the FBI, rather than local police, took the lead. And that can't help but augment the BSA's number-one antipiracy tactic for 1997: creating the "perception of threat."

And even warez gods don't necessarily want the FBI on their case. But bluster aside, people like Mad Hatter are intrinsically - and deliberately - much harder to catch. The most prestigious pirate groups - Razor 1911, DOD, Pirates With Attitude, the Inner Circle - are tightly knit clubs whose members have known each other for years and call each other "good friends" - though they rarely, if ever, meet. Joining is no easy task. Positions become vacant only when members quit or are busted, or a vote is taken to expand operations. Kudos and reputation are everything. Unofficial homepages can be found here and there, constructed by acolytes who celebrate the groups' best releases and victories. These are often padded out with cryptic biographies and obituaries for those busted by the cops ("We feel for ya!"). Despite the boasting, and the draping of their releases with corporate motifs - logos, front ends, graphics, even signature tunes and Java applets - crackers' true identities typically remain secret, even to one another.

The anonymity, however, works both ways. Cloaked in his own secret identity, Phil says he has managed to get deep within several major groups in the past 18 months and is skimming the surface of several others. He can convincingly portray himself as a caring, sharing warez god.



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Energizer Bunny Screen Saver for Windows

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* Graphics    : VGA/MCGA                                                     *
* Sound       : Soundblaster/Adlib/PC Speaker                                *
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Great ScreenSaver for Windows, nice graphics and Sound....

                                                - Brain Donor
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* Arrested Development ..... TZU-WHQ-1992 . 3 Nodes . World Headquarters .  *
* The Ghetto ............... 914-524-9345 . 2 Nodes . North Eastern HQ ...  *
* The Dark Realm ........... 305-344-9895 . 1 Nodes . Courier HQ .........  *
* Phase Shift .............. 604-732-3233 . 2 Nodes . Canadian HQ .........  *
* The Zombie's Zoo ......... +49-XXX-XXXX . 2 Nodes . European HQ .........  *
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* Boner's Domain ........... 314-434-8706 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Psycho Neurosis .......... 301-946-3835 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Frayed Ends of Sanity ..... 713-463-3122 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Plutonium Mines ........... 519-978-3388 . 2 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Underwould ................ 914-355-1131 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Enchanted Grove ........... 501-964-8220 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Shadow Land ............... 609-256-0332 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Southern Comfort .......... 510-828-8439 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Pirate's Paradise ......... 802-223-4304 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Touch of Evil ............. 914-897-9775 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* Nuclear Wasted ............ 914-226-3435 . 1 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
* The Hinterlands ........... 914-472-4814 . 2 Nodes . Distribution Site ..  *
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TZU 1992 : The Definition of Qualitity!

"You make some good friends," he says with a smile. And, it seems, you can end up pretty impressed. "Some of these people are incredibly talented. The logic and programming behind their setups are just amazing." Or maybe he's just bluffing?

WAREZ AND WHYFORES

In Phil's world, warez dealers are thieves. In warez world, the software companies are the criminals. "Most products you buy from a store can be returned if you are unsatisfied," reads the beautifully crafted Warez FAQ, on the Inner Circle's Web site. "Software cannot." The Inner Circle thus can claim to have a practical motivation - providing "a place to find something you might want to evaluate before purchasing." All right. "I personally have bought progs that I demo'd first from warez," declares Clickety. "I have more warez than I could ever hope to install on my poor drives. Tested a lot of crap also that I was glad I didn't pay for - deleted it right off the bat. I have recommended software to clients based upon using a pirate version at home."

"Software developers have families, and should be able to support them," reads the Warez FAQ. "We do advocate buying your own software if you really like it and use it heavily," adds Mad Hatter. As Phil and his friends are well aware, the line between piracy and ownership is very blurred. For example, it's commonplace for 3-D animators and modelers to use pirated, cracked, or at least unlicensed copies of their office software at home, for overtime or experimentation. In some minds, it's even a "necessary evil," a slightly arcane marketing strategy, a rather reckless approach to branding - look at Netscape.

Indeed, many software executives privately acknowledge that piracy - especially the attention it brings to new releases - can be a valuable way to develop markets. Novell's Martin Smith might disagree. He spends "99.9 percent" of his time fighting piracy, and he worries that the next generation of browsers will seamlessly marry the Web with Usenet. "The newsgroups will be a lot more accessible," he says, with something close to resignation, "which is going to make the whole thing a lot more widespread and give these guys a much bigger market. There's not much we can do, other than encourage ISPs not to take them."

The difficulty is that, once it's up, a Usenet post can generally be canceled only by the author or a sysop from the post's point of origin, "server zero." Even if a cancel is issued, it takes time to ripple across the network. A warez regular would be able to grab the file before it was vaped. Some servers refuse on principle to honor cancels.

"Even the most diehard warez hater in news.admin.hierarchy would defend your right to be safe from cancels," claims TAG. Many commercial ISPs have taken the industry's encouragement and dropped the warez groups, but lots of free servers are carrying on. And things aren't helped by the lack of a clear legal framework. Imagine the scenario: a program that belongs to a US company is uploaded via a router in Canada to a server in South Africa, where it is downloaded by a Norwegian operating out of Germany using a US-based anonymous remailer, then burnt onto a CD in the UK and sold in Bulgaria. "How would you prosecute that mess?" asks Smith. "It's a jurisdictional nightmare."

And the profit pirates are getting more creative. Smith cites the Web page of one warez guru, offering a premium-line phone number: for $3 a minute, you can listen to details about the best warez FTP sites, their addresses, and their login passwords. "Updated every three days for your convenience," it declares. It also makes provisions for those dialing from outside the US. The selling of information that leads to illegal use of information - a difficult case to prosecute.

"Our strategy is to bring a critical mass of prosecutions," says Smith. "We'll take out some people who're downloading this material - the gnats - and then we'll take out some of the larger, more organized guys. The people who are packaging it up and zipping it onto CD-ROMs." Which might work in a world where software was always bought on CD-ROM. But in pushing ever deeper into electronic commerce, where more and more real commercial software (browsers, little applets) is being given out for free, where t he Internet is the ultimate distribution network, this looks a little ropey. Friction-free markets and friction-free piracy run in tandem. The Inner Circle already has its PGP-encoded giveaway mall in place. Smith knows all this. There's just not much he can do about it. "All it needs is one server in one country where there are no laws to counter copyright theft, and there are plenty who will - the likes of Libya, Bulgaria, and Iran.

One country with a decent enough telephone infrastructure is enough to undo a hundred busts in the West." Even if laws are constitutional or enforced, larger biases come into play. "Try asking a Saudi policeman to arrest a Saudi software pirate on behalf of an American company. Forget it."

DINGLE MY DONGLE

The alternative to policing is burglar-proofing: making things harder to crack. In principle, you might think that the gazillion-dollar software industry would be able to produce uncrackable software. In practice, it can't, although it certainly keeps try ing.

Take the dongle, for example. It is the summit of copy protection, an explicit melding of software and hardware. Without the right hardware key - the dongle - plugged into the machine's parallel port, the software won't run. And without the right software , the dongle is a mindless doorstop. Calls to the dongle are woven into the code at the lowest level. "The program may call the dongle every 150 mouseclicks, or every time you print, or every time you select flesh tones as your desktop color scheme," says one dongle expert. If the response to the call is false or not forthcoming, the program shuts down.

All communications between the two are encrypted by uncrackable algorithms. Internal security fuses ensure that any attempt to hack the dongle mechanically will cause it to self-destruct. "Nothing short of an electron microscope," says the expert, "could extract the algorithm from that mess."

The biggest player in the dongle market is Rainbow Technologies, whose Sentinel hardware keys are used by 55 percent of all protected software. There are 8 million Sentinel keys attached to 8 million printer ports the world over. The company calls it "the world's most effective way to stop piracy" - a clarion call to crackers if ever there was.

The logical approach to cracking a hardware key is to create a "pseudodongle" - a chunk of code that sits in memory, giving the correct answers to any query. To do this, a cracker would have to monitor and trap traffic to-ing and fro-ing across the parallel port, then use this information to build an infallible query/response table. Unfortunately, if the query is, say, six characters long, it can have more than 280 trillion responses (281,474,976,710,700 to be exact). With the speed of modern machines, this would take approximately 44,627 years to collate. With the SentinelSuperPro dongle ("the most secure and flexible protection available") the query length can be 56 characters - requiring a mere 10 125 years (in theory) for a complete table. However, the dongle in SentinelSuperPro for Autodesk 3D Studio MAX was cracked in just under seven days of its retail release - substantially less than the 44 millennia emblazoned on the sales brochures. Other expensive high-end applications that use Sentinel - including NewTek's LightWave 5 and Microsoft's SoftImage - have ended up the same way: cracked, repackaged, and redistributed to every corner of the Internet within weeks of their release.

How? Instead of attempting to simulate the dongle, expert crackers simply remove its tendrils from the program code, unraveling the relationship skein by skein, function by function, call by call, until the application ceases to need the dongle to function. Then it's ready for anyone and everyone to use - or, more likely, gawk at.

Nobody says this is easy. There may be only three or four crackers in the world who could manage such an opus. But with the Internet to transmit the result, only one needs to succeed. With the latest wave of dongles, warez world looked to Russia to get the job done - and a shadowy group called DOD "won" the contract. The self-styled "Warez Bearz of Russia and Beyond," DOD appears to have arms throughout Europe, Asia, and the US. It undid Microsoft SoftImage's dongle protection in two weeks, which wasn't easy. The crew riotously celebrated in their "NFO" file: "Totally awesome work of glorious DOD cracker - Replicator after five other crackers gave up! We decided not a do a crack patch 'coz it will take too much time to code it ... you ask why? 'Coz there are only 72 (!!!) EXEs patched. All options now work 100%!"

NFO files do more than brag or supply installation instructions; they testify that the ware is a bona fide release, guaranteed to work. And this is more than just posturing; a group's reputation is paramount. Each release is painstakingly beta-tested. These are their products now, their labors of love. Nobody wants to find a "bad crack" in his hands after a seven-hour download. Nobody wants to be accused of being "unprofessional." Nobody wants the ignominy of anything like the bad crack for Autodesk's 3D Studio that made the rounds in 1992. For all intents and purposes it ran correctly, all features seemed 100 percent functional. Except that the dedongled program slowly and subtly corrupted any 3-D model built with it. After a few hours of use, a mesh would become a crumpled mass of broken triangles, irrevocably damaged.

Cleverly, Autodesk had used the dongle to create a dynamic vector table within the program. Without the table, the program struggled to create mathematically accurate geometry - and eventually failed. Many a dodgy CAD house saw its cost-cutting measures end in ruin. Autodesk support forums and newsgroups were flooded with strangely unregistered users moaning about the "bug in their version of 3D Studio." A rectified "100 percent cracked" version appeared soon after, but the damage was done. The Myth of the Bad Crack was born, and the pirate groups'

reputations tarnished.
But the pirates bounced back. They always do. And there's no reason to think that there's any way to stop them. Software security people are at an intrinsic disadvantage. Compare their job to that of securing something in the real world that's valuable and under threat - a bank, say. Typically, only one set of armed robbers will hold up a bank at a time, and they'll get only one crack at it. Imagine an army of robbers, all in different parts of the world, all attacking the same bank at the same time. And in the comfort of their own homes. Not just once, but over and over again. Imagine that each set of robbers is competing against every other, racing to be first in. Imagine, too, that some of the robbers are so technically adept that they could have built the alarms, the safe, and even the jewels themselves. And that they have cracked more than 30 banks with the same protection system. And that they're learning from all their failures, because they're never caught. No security could realistically resist such an onslaught. It may be that the only way to avoid having your software cracked is to put no protection whatsoever on it.

NO CHALLENGE, NO CRACK.

Popularity only feeds the frenzy. Doom is a good example. In 1993, id Software distributed the original shareware version of its nasty-guns-in-nasty-dungeons masterpiece on bulletin boards, CompuServe, and a then-little-known system called the Internet. Downloaded by more than 6 million people worldwide, Doom was a trailblazer in the world of modem marketing. The shareware gave you a third of the game: if you liked it, you had to buy the rest on disks. Millions did. Doom and its makers became a dream target. Weeks before Doom II's release, the sequel was available on the Internet - not as shareware, but warez. And not just as a teaser, but the whole damn thing. "Yeah, that was leaked," says Mike Wilson, id's then-vice president of marketing, now CEO at Ion Storm. "Can't tell you how much that hurt." The leaked copy was rapidly traced - rumors abounded that the version was a review copy fingerprinted to a British PC games magazine - but too late. It was already on Usenet, doing the rounds on IRC, filling up FTP sites. The pirates were in ecstasy and id was left with recoding the final retail release, to ensure future patches and upgrades would not work on the pirated version. Then they shut the stable door. No more external beta testing; no more prelaunch reviews. "We assured ourselves it would never happen again," says Wilson. "No copy of our games would leave the building."

Nice try. Quake, Doom's much-anticipated follow-up, turned up on an FTP server in Finland three days before the shareware come-on was due to be released. The pirate version was a final beta of the full game - complete with eerily empty unfinished levels and bare, unartworked walls. Within hours, it had been funneled to sites all over the globe. IRC was swamped with traders and couriers desperate to download.

"Somebody actually broke into our then poorly secured network and started to download it right before our eyes," Wilson recalls. "We managed to stop the transfer before he got all of it. We traced the call, got his name and address. He was pretty scared, but, of course, it was some kid. We didn't pursue that one. It hurt, but not enough to put some little kid in jail."

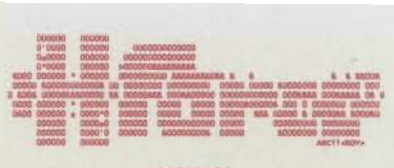
When the legitimate Quake hit the stores last year, it was initially in the form of an encrypted CD, which let you play a shareware version for free but would only unlock the rest on receipt of a password, available for purchase by phone. The encryption scheme, an industry standard called TestDrive, was eventually cracked by a lone European pirate called Agony. And id's crown jewel was now available, courtesy of a 29K program. "In order to unlock the full version, you are supposed to call 1-800-IDGAME 5," Agony gloated in a posting. "Hahahahahah."

"We knew it was going to be hacked," says Wilson. "We of all people knew. But we thought it was safe enough, certainly safer than Doom II." And, truth to tell, it didn't matter too much. The gap between the game's release and the warez version becoming widespread was enough for id to sell the copies they expected. "Copy-protection schemes are just speed bumps," laments Wilson.

Nobody really knows how much actual damage cracking does to the software companies. But as the industry rolls apprehensively toward the uncertain future of an ever-more frictionless electronic marketplace, almost everyone thinks piracy will increase. "The level of activity out there is overwhelming. We know that we have to take action to take control of it. We will continue to bring a critical mass of prosecutions," says Novell UK's Smith. He doesn't sound all that convinced.

Somewhere back on the US East Coast, Mad Hatter has a final swig of ginger ale and settles down to bed with his wife, White Rabbit. She thinks his obsession is a wasted resource, but didn't complain when he installed the latest version of Quicken on her computer - a cracked copy, of course. "We are all family men, married with children, day jobs, dedicated accounts, and multiple phone lines," Mad Hatter says. "Our kids have been looking over our shoulders for years. They will be the next couriers, the next warez gods."

David McCandless (dmacca@cix.compulink.co.uk), a London-based writer, musician, and film editor, is still bitter about being



P R E S E N T S

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*                          QUARKXPRESS V4.05                                  *
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* Type.........: DTP                * Packager......: BIZZY                   *
* Publisher.....: QUARK INC.        * Cracker.......: NOMO                    *
* Supplier.....: BARRY SCHECK       * Release Date..: 08-08-96                *
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*  Release notes..                                                            *
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*                                                                             *
* As a professional publisher, you probably produce everything from           *
* black-and-white flyers to full-color, corporate communications. Or, you     *
* may specialize in newspaper or magazine publishing. No matter what you      *
* produce, you'll appreciate the versatility and power of QuarkXPress.        *
* QuarkXPress adheres to publishing standards such as the type and            *
* page-composition measurements and precision pioneered by designers,         *
* typesetters, progress experts, and commercial printers. QuarkXPress also    *
* has unlimited publishing options available through XTensions(TM), which     *
* customize and expand the program's capabilities.                            *
*                                                                             *
* If seven years is long enough to make, married couples itchy, think what    *
* it does to faithful users of a page-layout application who wait that long   *
* for a major update. Yes, it's been just about that long for QuarkXPress     *
* users. The fact that QuarkXPress has continued to dominate the print        *
* publishing market despite the long delay says a lot about the program's     *
* sound design and reliability. But you'd better believe that expectations    *
* are mighty high for version 4.0. And if those expectations aren't met,      *
* the faithful may be faithful no longer.                                     *
*                                                                             *
* Here we are, bringing you QuarkXPress V4.0 with more than 75 significant    *
* new features paced by powerful B,zier-based drawing, layout, and design     *
* tools for additionalversatility; a suite of features geared to long         *
* document producers and networked corporate workgroups; and a redefined      *
* interface boasting pop-out tools and tabbed dialog boxes for easier         *
* navigation.                                                                 *
* The new features are capped by enhancements designed to make QuarkXPress    *
* the most efficient page layout application available!                        *
*                                                                             *
* Installation:                                                               *
*                                                                             *
* * Unrar into root of your drive. The directory <drive>:\XPRESS is           *
*   created; run INSTALL.EXE.                                                 *
*                                                                             *
* * When Install asks for the QuarkXPress CD, simply browse to your           *
*   <drive>:\XPRESS directory and hit enter.                                  *
*                                                                             *
* * Enjoy it.                                                                 *
*                                                                             *
*                                                                             *
*  When as many groups bring you crap fakes non-working, X-FORCE always      *
*  gets you the best of the best. ACCEPT NO IMITATION !                       *
*                                                                             *
*                                                                 X-Force 1997*
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*  Group News & Greetings..                                                   *
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*                                                                             *
*                                                                             *
*  Dont Stop at the Top, Feel the Power, Feel the FORCE before you Drop       *
*                                                                             *
*                                                                             *
*  OUR DIAMONDS-4-EVER GREETINGS MUST GO TO :                                 *
*                                                                             *
*  Stingray , Mach One , Ones wally . Slain . Wildchild . Roamer              *
*  BlackMagic . Wayward . The Riddler . Longshot . DMC , Dim                  *
*  Blueyes, Winterhawk, Solar and the ones who deserve it ...                 *
*                                                                             *
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*******************************************************************************
*  The loyal ones..                                                           *
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*                                                                             *
*                                 LEADERS                                     *
*                    MACH ONE - ONES WALLY - STINGRAY                         *
*                                                                             *
*                                 SENIORS                                     *
*                    KAPITANO - MR SAINT - THE RIDDLER                        *
*                                                                             *
*                    Blueyes - Sharp - Bizzy                                  *
*                                                                             *
* Bugs Bunny - Defiance - Hooligan - Prodigal - Dim - Dogsbah - Reanimator    *
* Old El Paso - Black Bull - Utopian - Mad Grafx - Hurify - Adc - Merlin      *
* Hawk - Yum Yum - Wildchild - BlackMagic - Reggor - Beta - Jolly_R - Alpha   *
* Eddie - Boco - La Rodent - La Duke - Acp - Pledge - DeConspiracy            *
* Random - xDARKOx - Cynosure - Wirepolis - God Of Wa - Mutmp                 *
*                - Boozer - Wildhell - Izzy                                   *
*                                                                             *
*                                                                             *
*              Frosthead - Hurricane - MOD - TGK - Genius8                    *
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                    * all sysops are full members *

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*  Famous X-Force boards around the globe..                                   *
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*                                                                             *
* APPLY                 WORLD   HEADQUARTERS  Xxxxxxx          xx LINES      *
*                                                                             *
* 7 Seas                USA     Headquarters  James West       10 Lines      *
* Strawberry Fields     EURO    Headquarters  Deuteros        10 Lines      *
* Crap Town             GERMAN  Headquarters  Anonymous        7 Lines      *
* Viva Mexican          SPAIN   Headquarters  Ones Wally       6 Lines      *
*                                                                             *
* Exxxxx                X-Force Ftp WORLD   HQ Xxxxxxx        50 Lines      *
* Dxxxxx                X-Force Ftp USA     HQ Xxxxxxx        50 Lines      *
* Sxxxxx                X-Force Ftp EURO    HQ Xxxxxxx        50 Lines      *
* Sxxxxx                X-Force Ftp COURIER HQ Xxxxxxx        50 Lines      *
* Rxxxxx                X-Force Ftp INET    HQ Xxxxxxx        50 Lines      *
* Axxxxx                X-Force Ftp MEGA    HQ Xxxxxxx        50 Lines      *
* Fxxxxx                X-Force Ftp         HQ Xxxxxxx        50 Lines      *
* Mxxxxx                X-Force Ftp MEMBER   Xxxxxxx          50 Lines      *
*                                                                             *
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*  How to reach us..                                                          *
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*                                                                             *
* If you think you should be in the .nfo but you are not, please call us     *
* a HQ and leave a message to a senior member , or just join the channel      *
* #x-force on Irc (efnet) , or mail leaders@xforce.net                        *
*                                                                             *
* If you want to be a part of the force email : leaders@xforce.net            *
*                                                                             *
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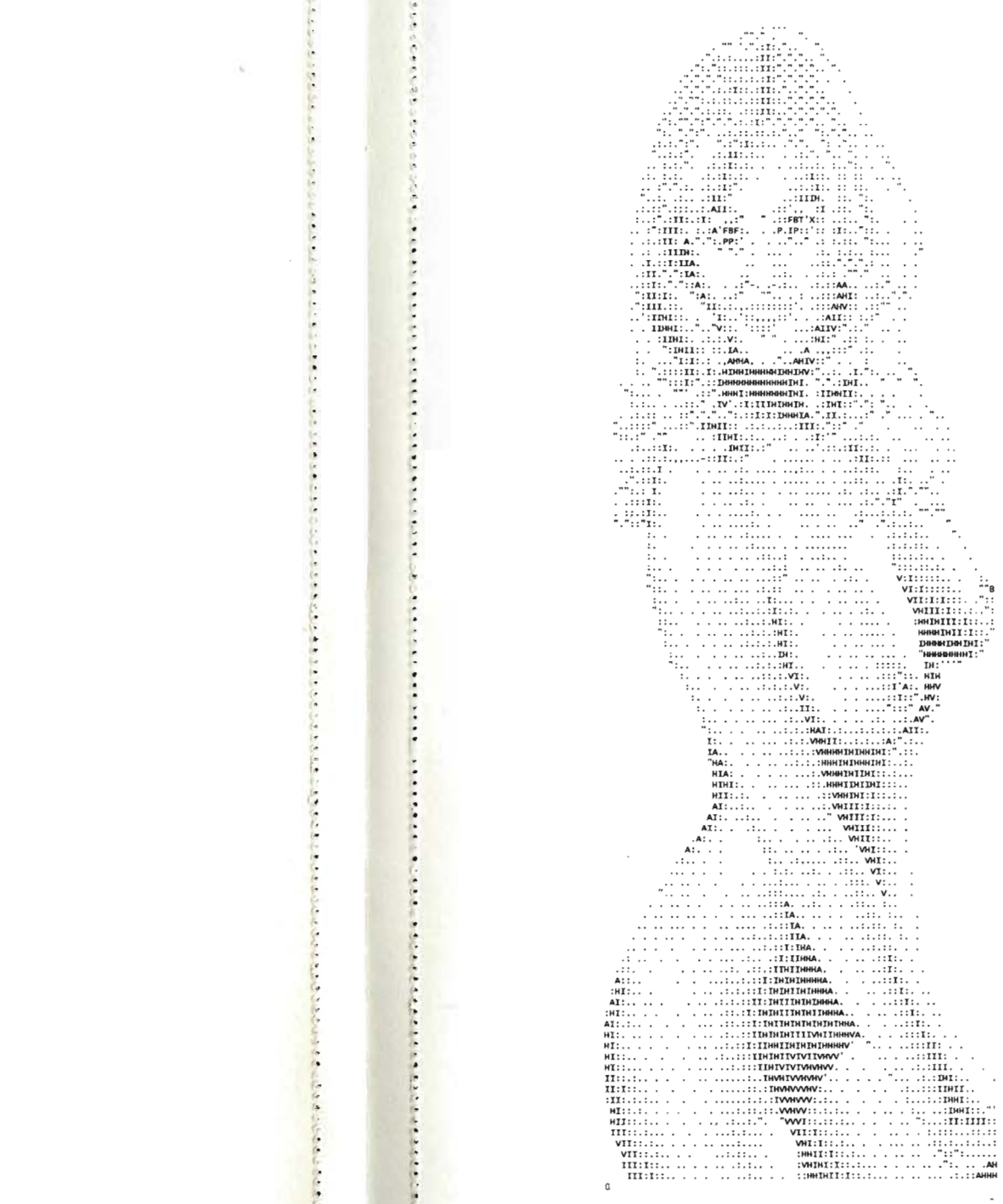
ASCII art: Pinups

Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase

ejm/rm

ANGELA



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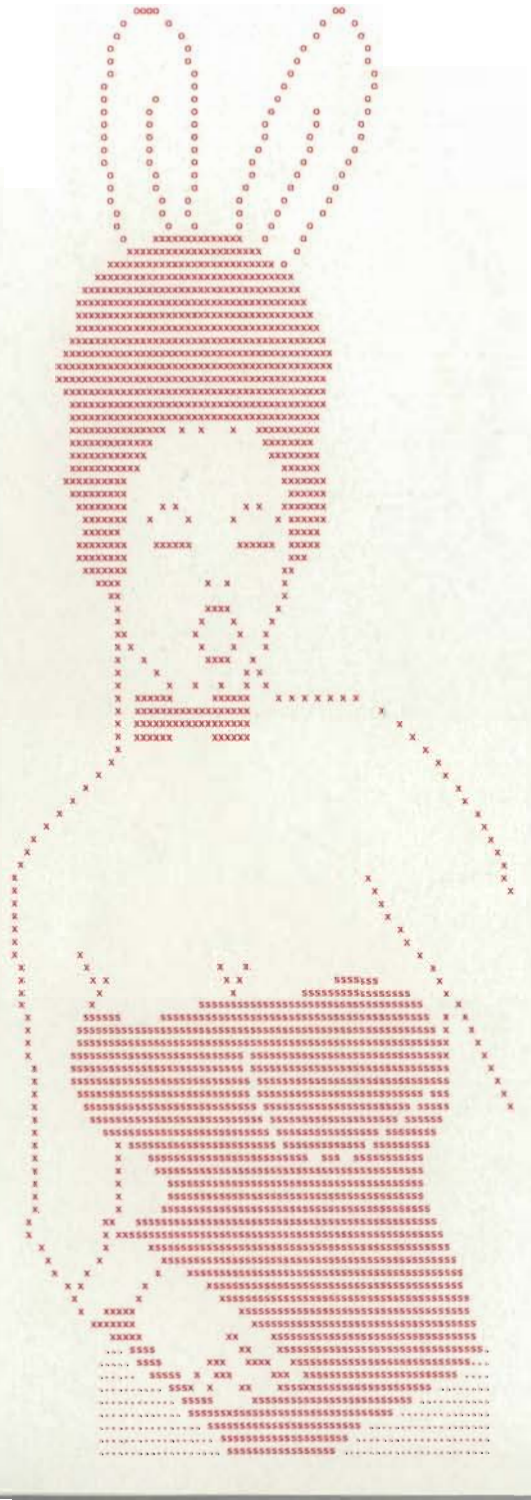
BETTY

BUNNY



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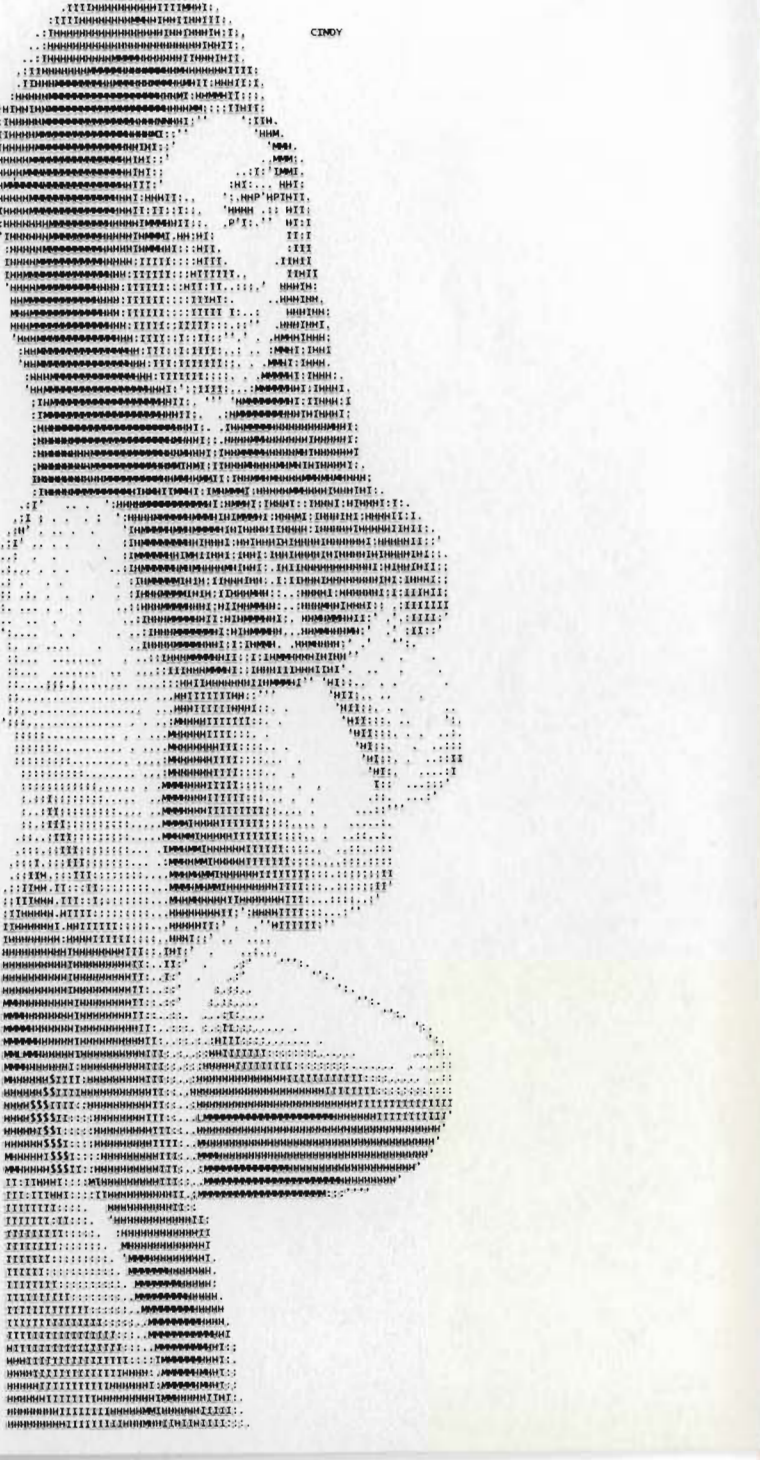

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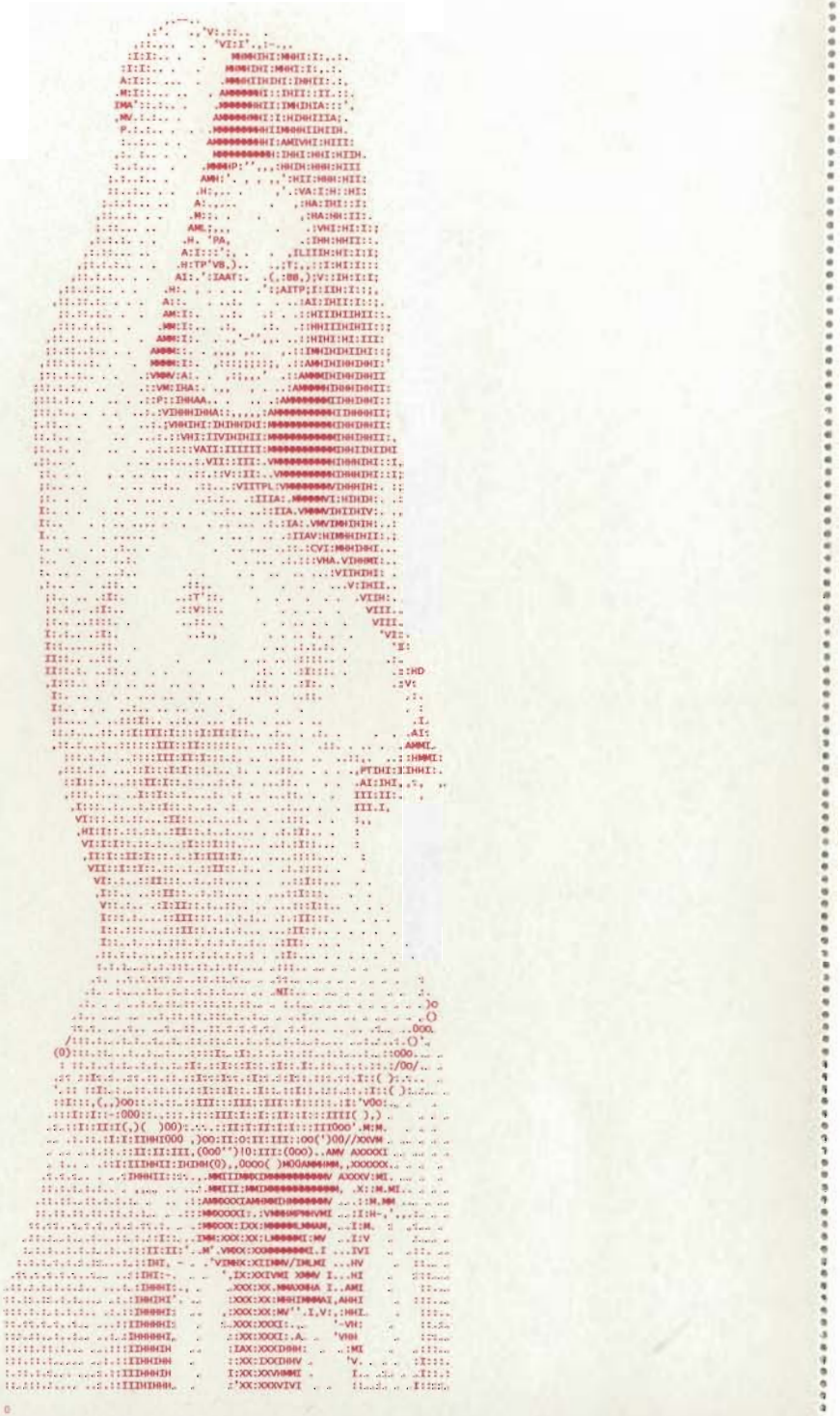

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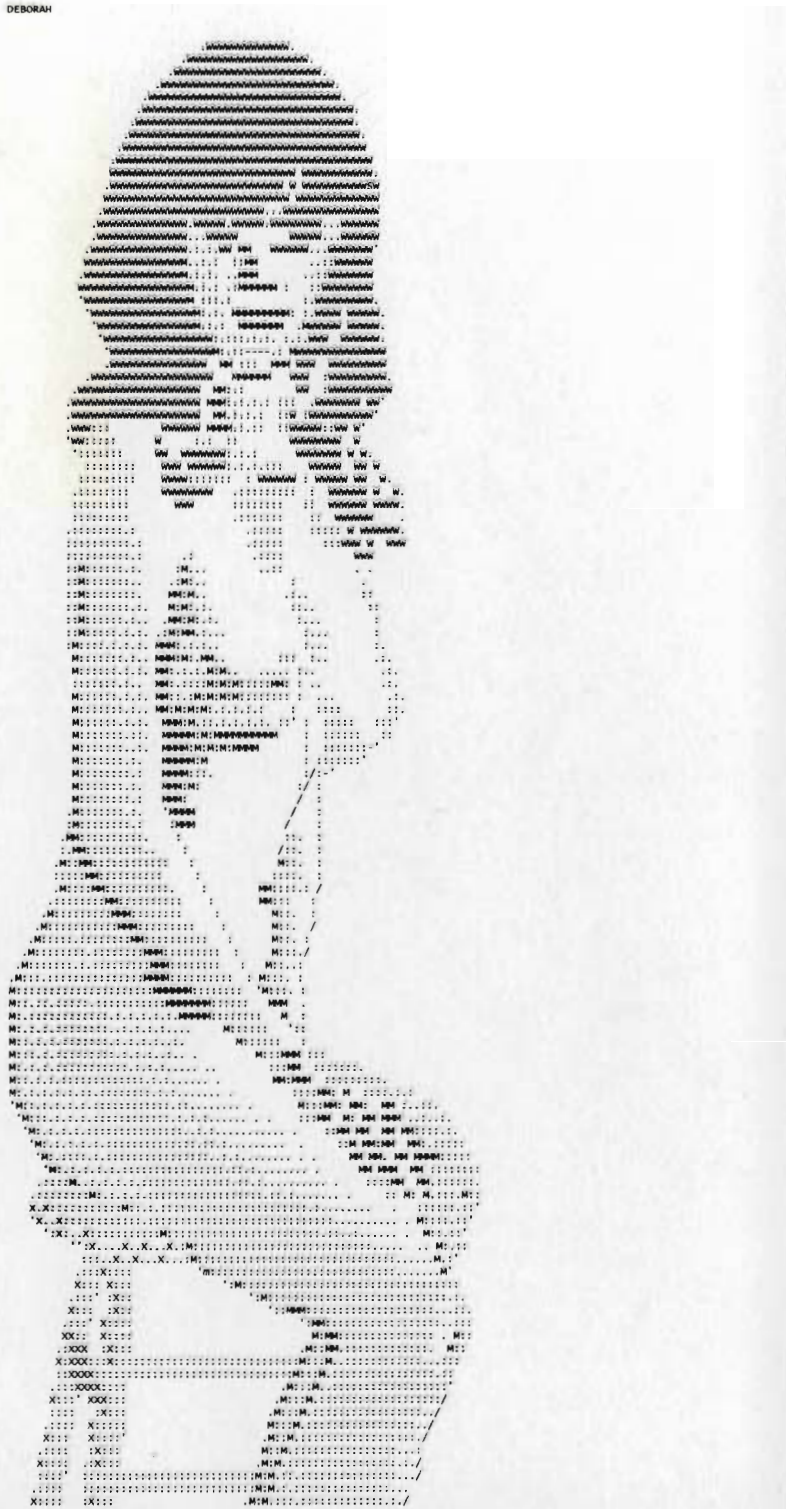
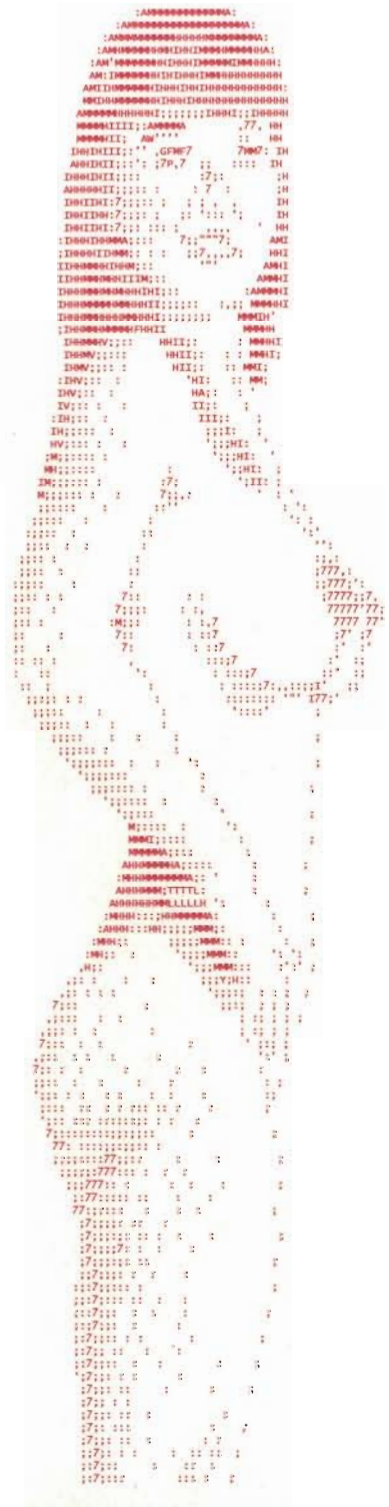
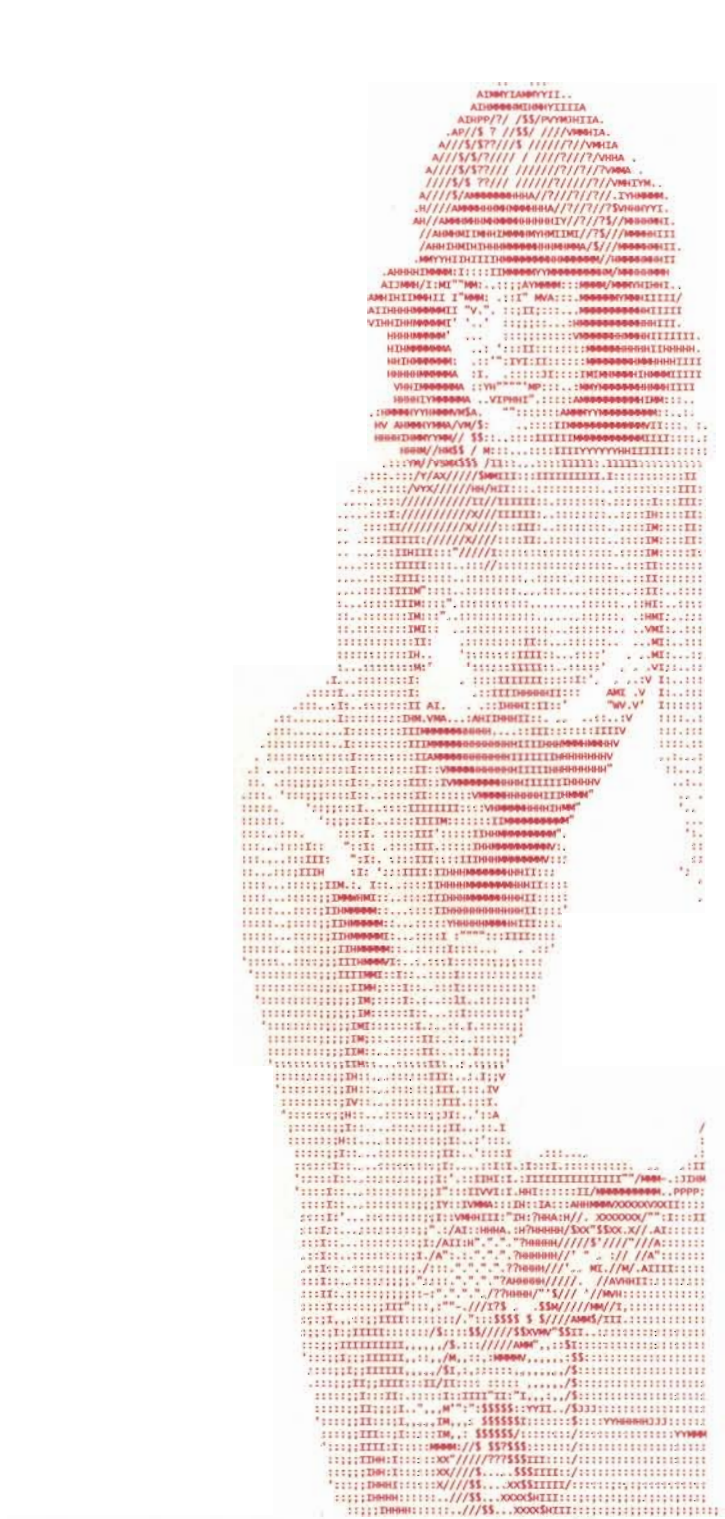


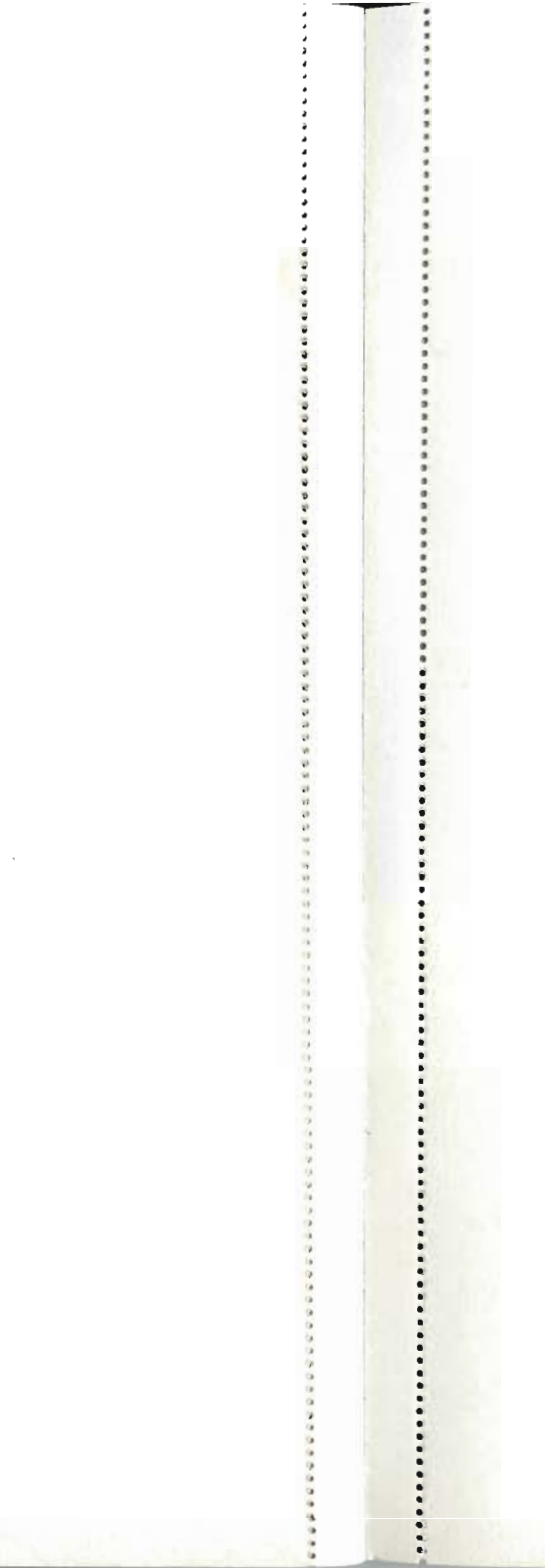


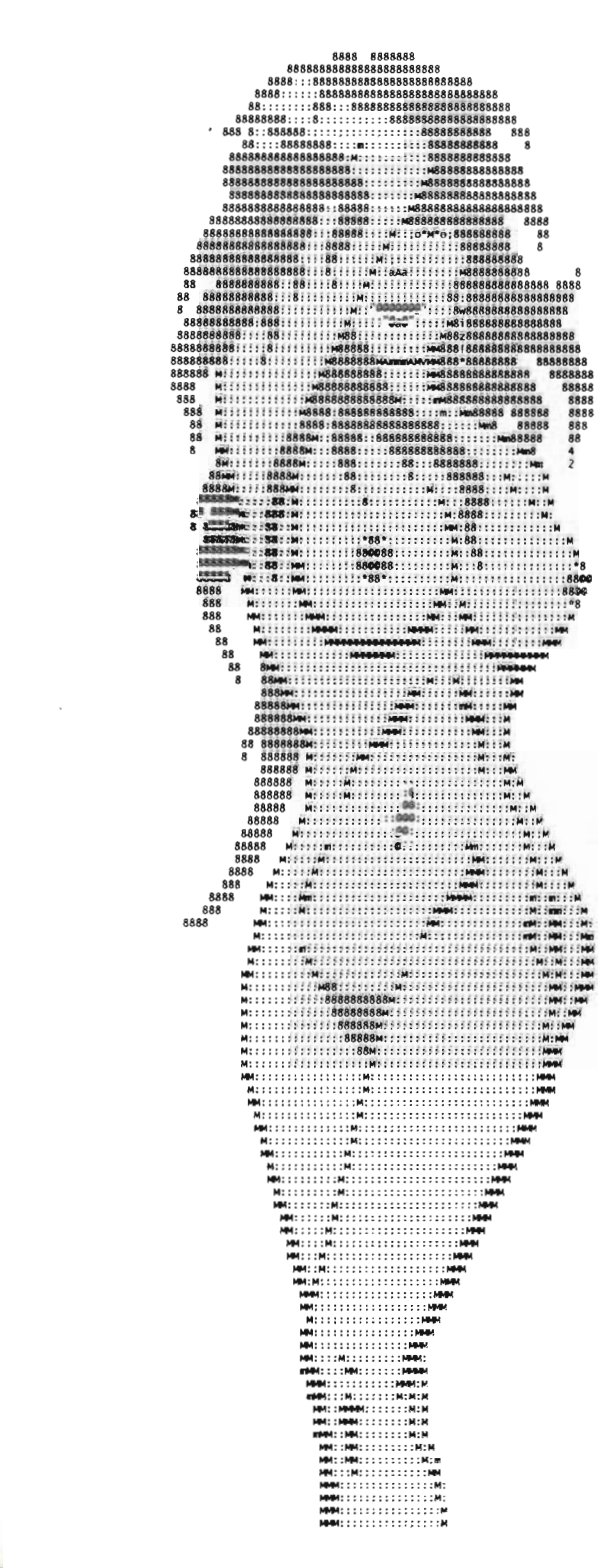
FRAN

KATHY

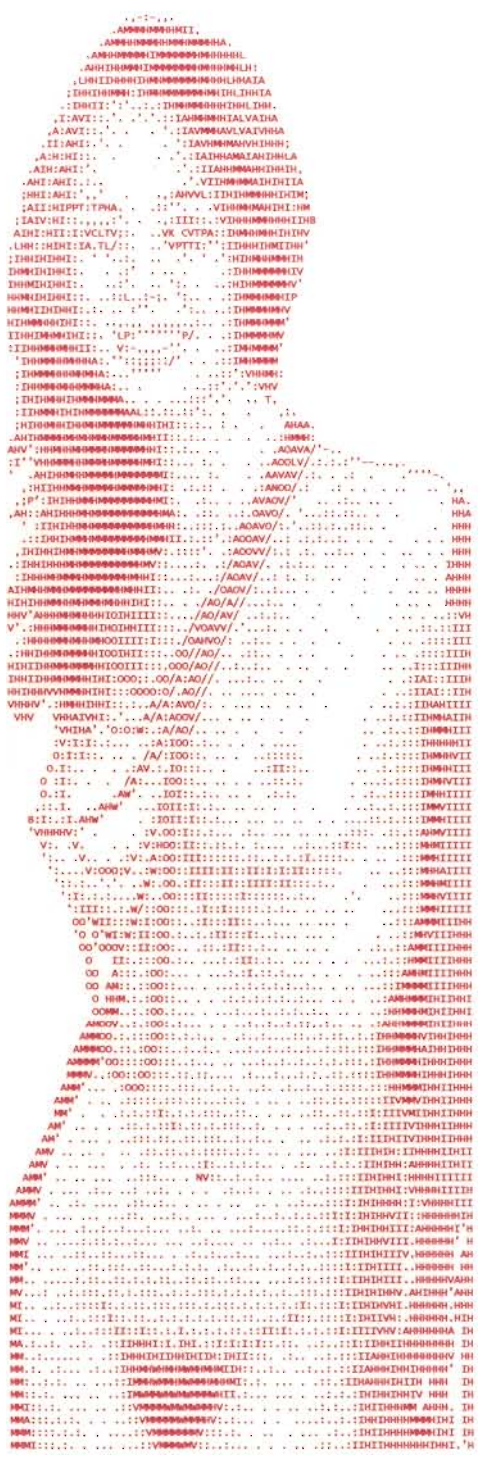
KELLY

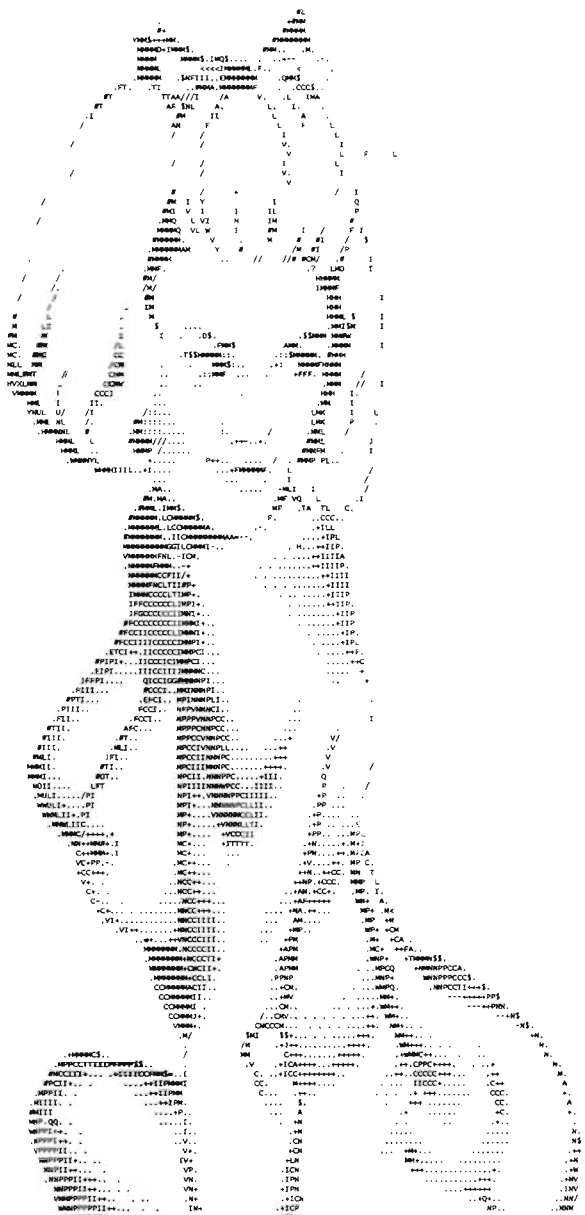


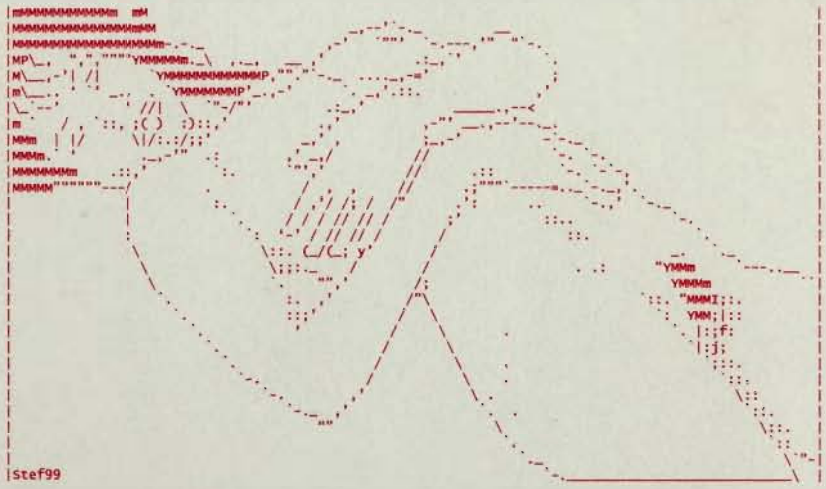




ROXANNE



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