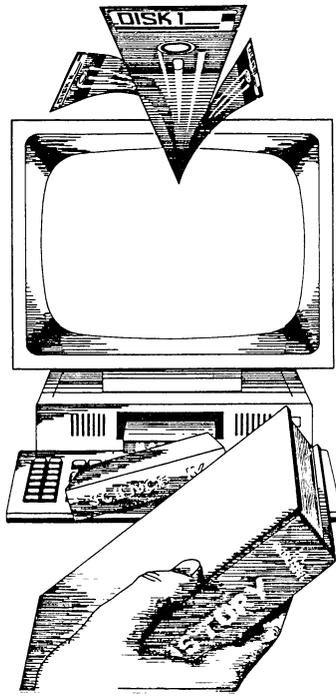


FUTURE SHOCK

THE
LIBRARY
BOARD
- 7 APR 1988

Software

Of greatest interest to librarians is the availability and dramatic decrease in the price of software. Microsoft's Bookshelf, which has been available for about six months for MS DOS machines, is described as a power tool for writers. It includes several standard reference works, including a dictionary, thesaurus, style manual, almanac, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* and a zip code directory. Two new Microsoft products for the broad consumer market are Small Business Consultant and Stat Pack.

One of the products which I found most exciting was Diversified Data Resources' CD-ROM Sourcedisc, to be available in May for under US\$90. The Sourcedisc includes a glossary of CD-ROM acronyms, current essays and articles about CD-ROM, the full text of Microsoft's CD-ROM publications, and marketing information on at least 250 commercially available CD-ROM titles in print.

Numerous companies indicated they are converting software from MS DOS to run on Apple drives. This includes Aries' MEDLINE Knowledge Finder, Bowker's Books in Print Plus, Grolier's Electronic Encyclopedia, and Facts on File News Digest.

Two products which make use of graphic and audio capabilities include the Electronic Map Cabinet and Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary from highlighted Data. Map Cabinet enables users to zoom in from an overview and select a close-up map of any region in the United States, while Webster's features recorded pronunciations of all entry words, in addition to the full text and graphics of the print edition. The dictionary can be displayed on-screen in 18-point type-size, making it the world's most comprehensive large-print dictionary for the visually impaired. The dictionary will be available for US\$199.

The Whole Earth Learning Disc also makes use of all the bells and whistles. It is an interactive electronic catalog compiled from the most useful books and tools appearing in the *Whole Earth Catalog* over the last 20 years. For example, users can access mail order catalogs of blues music with listings of recording artists then a click on a sound button plays a representative sample from the album selected. Or users can find a book review of *Peterson's Guide to the Birds*, view an excerpt card with text and an illustration of a bird, and click to hear its call.

The Whole Earth Learning Disc is just one of the applications that takes advantage of the Macintosh HyperCard, a personal information retrieval and navigational tool, which allows developers as well as users to link the contents of a database as they wish.

Before attending this Conference I might have asked, 'Why a CD-ROM conference?' There aren't floppy disc conferences or laser printer conferences. The answer is that CD-ROM is not just another peripheral. Both the content and delivery system offer unique and immensely creative potential.

Nancy Lane

ary. This means CD-ROMs from such publishers become portable between various drives.

However, this does not mean that CD-ROMs are transportable between computers with different operating systems, unless this is particularly specified. For example, the newly-released version of Books in Print Plus is now portable between MS DOS machines and Macintosh. The Visual Dictionary, includes 1000 images, 10,000 terms and audio pronunciation in English, French and Spanish, is available for MS DOS, Macintosh, Apple IIe and IIGS series, and Atari computers.

Although common wisdom is that CD-ROMs don't work well in a network environment, several speakers addressed this question and maintained that, depending on the type of network activity, CD-ROMs can work very well in many cases. In particular, the Dialog representative announced interest in providing multiple-disc, multiple-user access, and Apple is specifically designing its drives to work in the Appleshare network environment.

Current industry concern centres on two proposed motion video standards. The major contenders are CDI (Compact Disc Interactive) from Philips and DVI (Digital Video Interactive) from General Electric. CDI is aimed primarily at the home entertainment market, with self-contained players and products expected in time for Christmas, 1989. Because of present storage requirements, video occupies approximately 40 per cent of the screen or less. The DVI chip provides for full-screen use, made possible using sophisticated compression and decompression algorithms. The DVI standard was endorsed by both Microsoft and Lotus at the conference. Both Philips and GE are actively encouraging third-party developers.

Future Shock is here! Nancy Lane reports on the glitz and hype of the Microsoft CD-ROM Conference in Seattle and introduces *InCite* readers to some glorious examples of CD-ROMspeak — 'Hypercard', 'Appleshare', 'CVI/DVI'...

The undercurrent of energy... the spark and the crackle... the glitz and the glitter... Microsoft's International CD-Rom Conference is like no other conference I've ever attended.

What explains this electricity amongst the participants? Perhaps it's the entrepreneurial prospect of hitting the crest of the wave and making big bucks. Or perhaps it's the messianic zeal which comes from working at the cutting edge of a technology, knowing you have the product of the moment.

The physical setup reinforces the atmosphere. The ballroom of the Westin Hotel in Seattle is a stage wired for lights, audio, and video — \$150,000 worth. Four giant video screens assure participants of seeing and hearing all, including numerous slides, video clips and CD-ROM real-time demonstrations. Speakers are exceptionally polished — and so they should be, as youthful chief executive officers of America's strongest growth companies: Bill Gates of Microsoft, Jim Manz of Lotus, and John Sculley of Apple.

In chairing the opening session, Carl Stork of Microsoft outlined the requirements for expanding the CD-ROM market: (1) affordable hardware, readily available through retail outlets; (2) agreed-upon standards; and (3) low cost, high interest titles for a horizontal or mass market. This session occupied the whole morning, and was devoted exclusively to industry-wide announcements, nearly 30 in all. Most speakers addressed one or more of these three aspects, while several acknowledged the existing strong vertical or specialist markets, including libraries.

Hardware and Standards

Radio Shack announced they are offering wide general accessibility by marketing the Hitachi CDR — 1503S for under US\$1000. Egghead Software, which has grown to over 100 stores in less than four years, has decided to go against its 'software-only' policy, and retail CD-Rom drives for MS DOS machines.

Apple Computer held a special press conference to announce its Apple CD SC drives, which will plug into its full line — Macintosh, Apple IIGS and Apple IIe series.

The Apple CD SC will be available in the United States in May for under US\$1200. Amongst other features are 'desk accessory' software and an audio chip set that enable the CD SC to play commercial audio compact discs as well as audio tracks on the CD-ROM.

Many of the electronic publishers, including Dialog, indicated they would be supporting Microsoft Extensions and the High Sierra ISO standards announced in Febru-