Editor's Column
(Susan Small)

This bumper edition of the Newsletter is reaching you slightly later than it should have done because it has been held back for two important news items. The first is the announcement of the Winter Technical Meeting. This will be a joint venture with SUKUG in Oxford from 6-8 January 1993. Full details appear elsewhere in this issue and, if they are ready, booking forms should also be enclosed.

The second item is a report on the recent membership election for a place on Council and the selection of Officers and portfolios.

There are three conference reports which I hope you will find interesting. Rob McCron gives an unofficial insight into what goes on outside of the formal sessions and what we don’t read about in our proceedings. I would be glad to hear from anyone who would be willing to write up their experiences of meetings or conferences for future publication.

I am always very grateful to all my contributors, but special thanks should go out to Bill Barrett for his contribution to this issue — I understand that he has been away from work, lying on his back in pain. Quite how he got his copy to me I am not sure, but perhaps he can type in a reclining position.

This slight slippage of dates has led me to re-consider the publication dates of the newsletter and re-schedule next year's issues so that deadlines for copy do not regularly fall during main holiday periods. I hope this will assist future contributors and encourage more contributions. This means that there will not be a January 1993 issue, but future editions will appear bi-monthly as usual from February 1993.

I am very happy to receive unsolicited articles which can be sent to me by e-mail, snail-mail, telephone or fax. Contact addresses for people or organisations mentioned can be found on the back page.

In this issue you will find two fliers on training courses offered by Chris Robinson & Co. Chris specialises in the UNIX market place, and is known to us; we are therefore happy to commend these fliers to your attention. We are happy to consider requests from others who may prefer to use this form of advertising.
Advertisements consisting of 2-3 column inches will be accepted from members at no cost. However, if you wish to insert an A4 flier for dispatch with the Newsletter this will cost £100. Full details of this service can be obtained from the UKUUG Secretariat.

Important phone/address changes

The e-mail address for both Mick Farmer and Susan Small has been changed to dcs.bbk.ac.uk. This has been necessitated to avoid confusion with Czechoslovakian e-mail addresses.

The Owles Hall telephone numbers have been prefixed with a 2, ie 0763 273039

Publication Schedule 1993

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UKUUG News

Report from the Chair (Mick Farmer)

Let me start by thanking all of you who took the trouble to vote in our first Council election. We had three candidates of the highest calibre, and I think it’s satisfying for them to know that all your votes mean that you care about our group and its future. I can now formally welcome Lindsay Marshall of Newcastle University onto the Council. Thanks also to Ian and Jane for standing, thereby making for an interesting election.

The other members of Council were good enough to ask me to become Chair, which I have accepted. Thanks guys, for your faith in me! Jim Reid has taken over from me as Secretary, while Zdrav Podolski remains as Treasurer. Andrew Macpherson has agreed to take on the portfolio of conferences/events and Lindsay has agreed to take on the portfolio of LUGs/SIGs.

It’s a daunting challenge taking over from Sunil Das, who did so much for the UKUUG during his eight years in office. The fact that you’re reading this at all is the culmination of one of his dearest goals, a regular newsletter providing interesting news articles and keeping you, the membership, informed about UNIX and Open Systems in the UK and Europe. He was also an extremely accomplished conference organiser in the grand manner. After cutting his teeth organising the EUUG (now EuroOpen) London conference in 1988, he reached the pinnacle of this particular career with our own London conference in 1990 entitled "UNIX — The Legend Evolves", where Bell Labs chose to make their first public announcement about Plan 9. It’s true that members of the UNIX community coined the word "Suniling" to mean going on expense
account trips to exotic, far-flung, locations, and it’s also true that Sunil visited many continents and attended many conferences thereby. What’s often not appreciated is the immense amount of work he did on behalf of the UKUUG when away. He was always on the lookout for good speakers to come to our conferences — visiting universities, research establishments, and other organisations in order to get to know people on a personal level. This approach paid off handsomely when we think of the quality of speakers he attracted to our conferences. Thank you Sunil.

So much for the past, what of the future? I have taken over as Chair at the beginning of an exciting time for the UKUUG. First, we have cut our reliance on UKnet members also being UKUUG members. Network services expanding so rapidly in the UK mean that many non-UNIX sites are joining UKnet. We can’t expect them to join the UKUUG automatically. Therefore, we have to develop new services for our members which you think are worthwhile and that will attract new members as well! We have already embarked on this programme by encouraging the formation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and Local User Groups (LUGs). See the back of this issue for details of current SIGs and LUGs. We also intend to continue to expand upon our very successful series of one-day workshops. Not only have we had capacity attendance on the day, but our video recordings of the presentations continue to sell well.

Second, whether we like it or not, the UK is part of Europe. The UKUUG played an active role in formulating direction and policy within the European UNIX User Group (EUUG). The EUUG has now become EurOpen, emphasising the development from UNIX into Open Systems. We continue to work within EurOpen by having our members on their Executive and as members of various working parties deciding how EurOpen will evolve. It’s up to you, our members, whether we concentrate on UNIX in the UK or continue to influence the way Open Systems are adopted within the larger European community.

Third, we have to acknowledge the existence of groups similar to ours in outlook, and work together for the benefit of our members. I believe the days of haughty isolationism are over. As you will read elsewhere, we are holding our winter meeting in conjunction with the Sun UK User Group (SUKUG) for the first time. We have supported from the outset, a DTI initiative for encouraging dialogue and information sharing between Open Systems user groups — the latest details are reported in this issue.

Fourth, we have to grow — there’s no future in remaining a group of eccentrics who meet together and reminisce on how things were, or might have been. During my time as secretary, I have witnessed a doubling in membership. As your new Chair, I want to see this trend continue! However, a larger membership puts a strain on our freebie resources. Honorary officers, such as your Council, can’t contribute more and more time — we also have other jobs. We currently employ a Secretariat (Helen, Bill, etc. at Owles Hall), who handle our administrivia so well, and a Newsletter editor (Sue Small), who ensures that you read this regular offering. To ensure that we continue offering popular conferences and workshops we intend to employ an Events Manager. Additional services, that I’ve
only touched upon above, may mean that we need to employ further people. My hope is that you, our members, appreciate the better services. Naturally, our treasurer ensures that we spend every penny wisely!

I have given you an indication of how I would like to see the UKUUG evolve. I think we should position ourselves so that the UKUUG can influence UNIX, and Open Systems, developments in both the UK and Europe. I think we should be seen as "the UK Open Systems voice". Whatever I say, your views are paramount. Contact your Council with your views on how the group should be run. Our addresses are at the back of this newsletter. I hope that you will support us, your Council, in providing better and better services to more and more members.

New Services for Members

The coming year will see an expansion in the services we provide for members.

First, we have arranged with USENIX for every member to receive a year's subscription to their publication Computer Systems.

Second, we have a number of one-day workshops planned. The first of these will be an IP workshop probably in March; and the second will be a security workshop probably in May. Further details will be circulated as they become available.

LUGs and SIGs

The following is a round-up of information from those involved in organising local and special interest groups. If you feel that your neighbourhood is in need of a local group, or there is a need for a group on a specific topic, please let the Editor have details for inclusion in the Newsletter.

The only SIG which has so far got off the ground is the Personal Computer SIG and Charles' piece is below. My apologies to him for the incorrect e-mail address in the last issue - if you mailed him, please try again.

Cambridge LUG
(Piete Brooks)

I am delighted to report that Piete Brooks, who works in the Computer Laboratory at Cambridge University, has agreed to act as the local organiser. The SUKUG have regular meetings in the area and they have kindly invited all UKUUG members to attend their events (which aren't always about Sun products).

London LUG
(Andrew Findlay)

November 1992

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 26 November in Room 214 of the Computer Science (Pearson) building at University College in Gower Street (or will be signposted from there). It starts at 19.00hrs and the speakers are Mark Handley and Angela Sasse of the Computer Science Department at UCL. The title of their talk is MESSIE - An e-mail-based collaborative authoring
environment.

MESSIE was created by the speakers (and Shaw Chuang, who is now at cam.cl) on the basis of observations made during collaborative writing projects which aim to support geographically distributed authors. The first important observation is that many phases of joint authoring require asynchronous, rather than synchronous, collaboration support.

The second important observation was that authors are very reluctant to learn and adopt new tools for a familiar activity such as authoring.

MESSIE supports asynchronous collaborative authoring of documents via e-mail. A team’s document is stored at one site in a shared filestore, and administered with the help of a version control mechanism (we used SCCS). Authors submit and retrieve parts of the document by sending e-mail messages - all that is required is the facility to produce ASCII (or other e-mail-compatible formats) and access to e-mail.

Authors can therefore continue to use their own editors, wordprocessors, and mail systems. They only have to learn a small set of commands which have to be placed at the beginning of messages sent to MESSIE.

January 1993

This meeting will take place on Thursday 28 January 1993 in Room 214 of the Computer Science (Pearson) building at University College in Gower Street (or will be signposted from there) at 19.00hrs. Have you ever considered who controls those dot matrix signs that appear above our motorways? How do they know about traffic conditions ahead? In Holland it’s all done with computers! Our speaker is Jim Roberts, who is part of the team that designed and installed the latest systems; and it’s all done without closing the motorway.

As tradition dictates, post-meeting discussions take place in the Fitzroy Tavern (Charlotte Street) at 8pm.

Oxford LUG
(James Aldridge)

The Oxford Local UNIX User Group is gradually getting organised. Please contact James direct if you are interested, or ukuug-lug-oxford@uknet.ac.uk.

PC SIG
(Charles Atkinson)

Sorry to anybody who had problems e-mailing me after last month’s issue — a gremlin had reversed the address nodes. The correct version appears on the back page, gremlins permitting.

The PC UNIX market remains dominated by the two big players, SCO and Sunsoft. So much for the importance of Release 4, both these are 3.2 products! I am told that FUD (Fear Uncertainty and Doubt, more common in the world of very large file servers) has affected buyers to some extent with Sunsoft’s pre-announcement of Solaris for Intel but I don’t understand why — one of the joys of UNIX is avoiding vendor lock-in so why not go for the best of the current crop and move to Solaris later when any advantages are clear cut and it has had time to stabilise? At the moment Solaris is with ISVs (Independent Software Vendors) and it’s all very quiet.

Why have the Release 3.2 players been
able to maintain market share when mature Release 4 products are available? Does this demonstrate the power of advertising? Looking at some of these Release 4s: Dell in the UK are most reluctant to sell the oopsys without the box although it is quite common and well received in the USA. The other heavyweights are UHC and Micro Station Technology about which I know very little at the moment except that they seem to be well regarded. Any UKUUG members with experience of these systems?

Meanwhile BSDI, in beta since January, still looks promising. Apparently gamma has been out in the USA for some time and a production version is imminent. If it finds commercial acceptance (and survives legal battles) it will be very interesting to see how the PC UNIX market reacts - a full blown system for not much more than the price of an upgrade!

Thinking of advertising, I am intrigued by the way PC-UNIX adverts sell features, not benefits. Perhaps the vendors know that every buyer is, or uses, a UNIX expert. Probably true for workstations but for the DOS shop thinking of moving up to an entry level multi-seat installation? Or even the manager of an aging mini system wondering which way to jump? Maybe this is the difference between selling operating systems and solutions. Maybe this is a self-fulfilling prophecy about who the customers are!

UKUUG/SUKUG Joint Winter Conference (Andrew Findlay)

6-8 January 1993
University of Oxford

Call For Papers

The UKUUG and the SUKUG are running a joint winter conference this year. It will be a three-day event, and will take place in Oxford from 6 to 8 January 1993.

The conference will take a particular theme on each day. The first two themes are broad, and the third is quite specific:

Wed 6 Jan: Networking
Thu 7 Jan: Applications
Fri 8 Jan: Migration to Solaris II

The programme committee will be pleased to receive papers addressing any of these themes. Papers on other topics may also be accepted if it is felt that they would be of interest to the intended audience. Papers should be no more than 10 sides of A4, and preferably nearer five. Please note that the timescale shown below is very tight.

Critical dates:

Abstracts required by:
Friday 12 November

Acceptance notification:
Wednesday 17 November

Full text required by:
Friday 3 December

Submission methods:

Submission by e-mail is preferred, to:

january-conference-papers@brunel.ac.uk

Format can be plain text or ‘troff -ms’. If you have difficulty expressing your paper in either of these forms, please send the abstract and title in plain text along with a note of your preferred format and we will contact you.
Submission on paper can also be accepted, to: UKUUG/SUKUG joint conference, Owles Hall, Buntingford, Herts, SG9 9PL

Submission by FAX is possible, but please make sure that your contact phone number is written very clearly on the first page in case we do not get a good copy: +44 763 273255

Booking details:

Booking forms will be circulated shortly by both electronic and paper mail.

Contact information:

UKUUG phone +44 763 273475
SUKUG phone +44 763 271894

DTI Open Systems Programme (Susan Small)

The Department of Trade & Industry have approached user groups like ours throughout the UK with an invitation to participate in this Programme. This is a major initiative which the Group is hoping to introduce very shortly. Exploratory meetings have been held around the UK, most of which have been attended by Mick Farmer and/or Bill Barrett.

Their initial reaction is that this is a good scheme which could provide a valuable service to our membership. The formal agreement will be sent to user groups who wish to participate for formal ratification, following which the scheme gets under way. A description of the scheme follows, but formal details will be circulated to members once they have been agreed.

There is a recognised need among medium and smaller sized user enterprises for independent information, advice and guidance in the practical areas of open systems planning and implementation.

One means of achieving this is to encourage greater user interaction, with information exchange on a one-to-one or a one-to-many basis. Since it is clearly impractical to approach this task nationwide at the level of the individual user, it is proposed initially to address it at the user group level. The intention is that any initiative should cascade down to the level of maximum usefulness.

The extent and amount of contact between formally established user groups appears to be very limited, even where common motivation exists, as in the case of open systems associations. In order to facilitate such communication, a first version of a simple Interest Group Register has been compiled and distributed. This enables direct contact to be made between the nominated representatives (NRs) of all the groups listed, for whatever purpose. It is expected that this will be used mainly for information exchange in the form of newsletters, articles, notices of conferences, requests for speakers and similar matters.

It is now proposed to build on this basic mechanism by creating a form of brokerage service to enable matching of user needs with potential sources of advice on solutions which exist within the user community.

Many companies wish to design and implement an open systems strategy, but encounter difficulties along the way. Suppliers are not necessarily the best source of advice in this situation, nor can the independence of consultants be taken for granted.

The DTI, under their Open Systems
Programme, have taken an initiative to help address this issue by creating the means of increased interaction and mutual support amongst IT users throughout the UK. It is called the DTI Open Link.

Objective

To facilitate the practical adoption of open systems by introducing users who have problems in planning and implementation to others who have the experience, expertise and willingness to help, on a one-to-one, no-charge basis.

Ownership

DTI Open Link is "owned" and operated by user associations and interest groups acting in co-operation with each other. It is supported by the DTI, whose role is to promote the service to users, monitor results and assist in the introduction of improvements when appropriate and desirable.

Process

Each association or group has a Nominated Representative (NR) who holds a complete register of participant groups classified by industry, application, size, location etc.

A request or enquiry is made to the "home" NR, defining the problem and the type of assistance required.

The NR consults the register and contacts their opposite number in a group which appears to offer the prospect of a solution.

If a willing respondent is found in that group, details of the enquiry are passed on so that direct user-to-user contact can be made.

When the information exchange is complete, enquirer and respondent both make a simple report of the outcome to their respective NRs. These reports are treated in confidence.

Benefits

Users can get independent advice and practical help from others with relevant experience and no axe to grind.

Users can gain by exposure to the ideas and practices of others in the same or different market sectors.

Users can promote their own excellence and help spread best practice.

Future

If users find the service valuable, changes will be made to reduce the critical dependence on user associations and their NRs and ensure the effectiveness of the service. There could include:

- creating a centrally resourced clearing house
- increasing the scope of the register to include individual user enterprises and more detailed information
- moving to electronic storage, distribution and access

Please note that the scheme is not currently operational. Information should be available early in the New Year.

FaceSaver Update
(Richard Murphy)

The FaceSaver put in an appearance at the
UKUUG LISA workshop in May and captured about 30 faces. These together with about 90 faces from the EurOpen conference in Jersey are now in the UKUUG archive at Imperial College.

The FaceSaver was invited to ecuc92 (the European Convex User Group) conference at Oxford in early October (the conference is reported elsewhere in this issue) and about 150 faces of the 250 delegates were captured. Thanks to Mick Farmer and Philip Riebold for their fine work under the glare of the new halogen lights.

The FaceSaver project is now looking for equipment sponsorship for the project to improve, so if you would like to see your organisation’s name associated with the FaceSaver stand at some of the key UK and European UNIX events then don’t hesitate to contact me.

Around Europe

IUUG Conference
(Sean Byrne)

13 November 1992
Killiney Court
Hotel, Killiney, Co.
Dublin

The Irish UNIX User Group in conjunction with Price Waterhouse will hold the first annual conference of the IUUG in Killiney on Friday 13 November 1992.

The conference will last from 09:00 to 17:30 and will be structured into three major areas:

VENDOR DISPLAYS

All the latest and greatest hardware/software in the UNIX and Open Systems arena.

PANEL DISCUSSION

A panel of invited speakers will give a presentation and ensuing discussion on the following topics:

- Battle for the Desktop

Now that the operating systems wars have tapered off the battle for the desktop is now on with a vengeance. The first of the panel discussions has presentations from most of the major players in this field, who will defend their positions in a panel discussion. This session will be chaired by Frank Bannister of Price Waterhouse and will include representatives from SCO, Sun, ICL, HP, Digital, etc...

- Battle for the Database

The majority of the newly acquired UNIX systems are bought to run a relational database system. But what differentiates the major database suppliers and what should you look out for in choosing one?

Representatives of the major database vendors will present their cases and, as with the morning session, will be available to answer your queries in open forum.
TUTORIALS

Five tutorials will be held during the morning and afternoon sessions:

T1,T4 Introduction to UNIX - aimed at anyone who needs to get a good grounding in the fundamentals of UNIX.

T2,T5 UNIX Networking and Internetworking - an introduction to the UNIX networking tools and utilities from the most basic to the de facto standards to ISO networking. A valuable introduction with a free diskette containing networking tools and utilities for UNIX.

T3 UNIX Security and Secure UNIX - A practical tutorial on UNIX Security for those who need to ensure the integrity of their systems. The second half of the tutorial will focus on Secure implementations of UNIX and the available and emerging standards for security under UNIX.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD 17:30 - 18:30

Notice is also given at this time that the IUUG Annual General Meeting will be held at the end of the conference in the Bay Room of the Killiney Court Hotel from 17:30 - 18:30. Nominations are now being accepted for positions on the Executive Board of IUUG; please send any correspondence in regards to the annual general meeting and your nominations to iuug-exec@ieunet.ie.

FEES AND REGISTRATION:

The fee structure for the event is as follows:

Members: £25
Non-Members: £70

Tutorials: £75 each

Registration can be accomplished by post to IUUG, P.O. Box 3396, Dublin 6, or by e-mail to iuug-conf92@manix.ie. Cheques and purchase orders should be crossed and made payable to "IUUG Conference account". Registration can be completed on site from 08:30 with the official start of the conference at 09:00.

Tutorial spaces are limited, so please book early.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

The Conference committee consists of:

Sean Byrne, Manix Systems
Pat Fogarty, DCU
John Pierce, ICL

Please direct any questions to iuug-events@manix.ie.

OpenForum 92 Conference and Exhibition (Pierre Scheuer)

23 - 27 November 1992
Royal Dutch Fairgrounds, Utrecht, The Netherlands

It is a particular pleasure for me to participate in this news@UK issue because I appreciate the quality of the publication and it is a good opportunity a month before OpenForum to stress the reasons why you ought to attend.

OpenForum is a EurOpen Conference: it consists of all the ingredients that have made our Technical Conferences successful in the past (you surely remember the London one):

The Technical Program put together by
Professor Dag Johansen the artisan of the Tromsø success, with ‘Distributed Computing, Practice and Experience’ as the theme, consists of original contributions addressing fundamental issues related to distributed computing.

Neil Todd has produced an outstanding tutorial program gathering internationally recognised tutors. Tutorials range from an ‘introduction to open systems for business managers’ to ‘how to program UNIX device drivers’.

An e-mail room will be available with over 20 systems to allow you to keep in touch with our "community".

And probably the most important aspect is that it will offer again an authentic forum for the interaction between and the exchange of views among EurOpen members. One of the privileged times for this will be the traditional Conference Dinner.

OpenForum fulfills your requirements: at past Conferences we have collected your recommendations for further EurOpen events. Over 1,000 questionnaires have been analysed and your expressed wishes have been integrated in building up OpenForum:

- every aspect of open systems from technical to business and strategy is covered by and for users
- over 100 speakers from 17 countries on both sides of the Atlantic and other parts of the world offer a multi-faceted perspective on the present and future of open systems
- Delegates will be welcomed to a hospitality and demonstration area hosted by leading open systems companies and organisations. OLTP based on Tuxedo from USL and DCE from OSF will be demonstrated in a multi-vendor environment.

OpenForum welcomes international technology leaders as speakers:

- Dr Arno Penzias, Vice President of Research, Bell Labs, Nobel Prize in Physics (1978)
- Dr Andrew Tannenbaum, Vreijensteuniversiteit, The Netherlands
- Doug Michaels, Vice President of SCO
- Roel Piper, President and CEO of USL
- Charles Reilly, Vice President, OSF

The European Commission "welcomes and supports the OpenForum Conference as a major user-led contribution to the development and spread of open systems" says Dr Michel Carpentier, Director General of DGXIII.

John Majo Cruzate, Advisor to M. Carpentier, in charge of development of information technologies and telecommunications policy and programmes will participate in the opening session.

Spring 1993 Conference and Exhibition

3 - 7 May 1993
Sevilla, Spain
The UUES (Spanish UNIX User Group)
will host the 24th EurOpen Conference and Exhibition in Sevilla, Spain. It will be preceded by two days of Tutorials on Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 May.

The theme of the Sevilla Conference is:

"Openness from the desktop to the machine room: the new challenge"

**Dates to Note**

25 October 1992
Deadline for receipt of full papers, or extended abstracts, by the Convention Secretariat.

29 November 1992
Notification to authors of the Programme Committee’s decision

29 January 1993
Deadline for receipt of the final camera ready texts by the Convention Secretariat.

The official language of the Conference is English.

Submissions should be sent to the EurOpen Secretariat.

**Reviews**

**Hurwitz Newsletters**
*(Mick Farmer)*

**Tool Watch**

A monthly publication from the Hurwitz Consulting Group reviewing and analysing news from the computing industry with a special emphasis on the tools and methodologies used for developing Open Systems applications. My review copy contains a number of short articles, ranging from the usual Open Systems hype to product announcements and reviews. All are well-written and have a down-to-earth approach. There are no pictures or diagrams, so the text is punctuated with highlighted extracts from the article,

UNIX vendors began to realize that only if they banded together and turned UNIX into something even a mortal user could love would disaster be averted.

as illustrated here. The target audience appears to be (middle) management, keeping them informed about the Open Systems movement and the range of tools now appearing that promise a cross-platform, cross-(you name it) environment. Many of the articles are written by Judith Hurwitz, a highly-regarded analyst in the USA. Subscription details below.

**Client/Server Tool Watch**

Another monthly publication from the same stable, concerned primarily with the world of distributed systems. The physical layout and mix of articles is much the same as her sister publication, as, indeed, is the general philosophy behind both Newsletters. In fact, they both use the same *Hurwitz Tools Benchmark* to arrive at a rating for a product. In my review copy their European correspondent, Joshua Greenbaum, gives the Eureka Software Factory a particularly hard time, but does justify his views. Given the similarity in the two publications, I do wonder whether the market can support them both, especially as they are not cheap! Subscription details below.
Conference Reports

The European X User Group Conference
(Bob McGonigle)

The recently held European X User Group conference and exhibition was a resounding success. This is the fourth year the event has been held, and X Windows continues to gain new ground and attract more players.

The exhibition was well-attended, with exhibitors offering a wide range of X terminals, software development tools, training programmes and connectivity products. Exhibitors included NCD, Tektronics, V1, VisionWare and IST.

Speakers addressed issues such as X for conferencing and group working; current technological trends; X over slow lines; display PostScript and graphics within X Windows.

Continuing the EXUG policy of inviting big names from the world of X, this year three US-based experts headed the programme - Doug Young, Oliver Jones and Bob Scheifler. The programme included presentations by over 20 speakers, from eight countries.

Pre-conference tutorials proved a major attraction. Subjects on offer this year included ‘Using C++ with Motif’, ‘Debugging X Programs’, and a course designed for newcomers to X - ‘From Awareness to Understanding’.

The strength of interest shown in this year’s conference has given a boost to EXUG plans for 1993, including a rolling programme of tutorials, seminars and workshops, to be held in centres in the UK.

Subscription details

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These newsletters can be ordered directly from the USA at the prices shown above, details about the Hurwitz Consulting Group at the back of this Newsletter. Alternatively they can be ordered in the UK from PGC Strategic Consulting, details at the back of this newsletter.

Media Letter

This third publication from the Hurwitz group is all about multimedia technology. Sandwiched between snippets of multimedia-related news and conference reports are some real gems, such as Cybersex and Hyperviolence (Woody Allen’s "orgasmatron" meets virtual reality and, more down-to-earth, a VCR setting to filter out the commercials) and What is Hollywood? (a similar view to that in Terry Pratchett’s "Moving Pictures"). Interactive multimedia is a growth area in business, education, and entertainment. This newsletter is ideal for those wanting to keep abreast of the technology, without having the actual facilities to dabble themselves. My opinion is that the price is outrageous given that my two review copies contained eight and twelve pages respectively. However, I understand that subscribers to Tool Watch now get Media Letter for free! Subscription details below.
and other EC countries.

This year’s proceedings are available for £30 (inc. P&P) from EXUG, PO Box 458, Cambridge, CB3 8SD. Payment by cheque or credit card.

USENIX UNIX Security III
(Rob McCron)

Baltimore, Maryland, USA
September 14 - 16 1992

Saturday 12th

This day did not start well, mainly because it started at 0445. This was necessary so that I could complete the last wee bits of packing and be ready for the taxi which was to whisk me away to Edinburgh airport at 0530. This duly happened. At the airport we went through the "Is this your bag did you pack it yourself have you read the notice ..." bit. At that time of the morning the answer to "Are you an international terrorist" would probably have been "Yes, I think so".

So onto the Gatwick shuttle, and one of those breakfasts comprised of things which never, ever comprise breakfast at ground level. I ate it, as this seemed the obvious thing to do with it. Once finished, I wasn’t so sure.

Sunny Gatwick! Never been there before. I joined the queue to check in for the flight, expecting this to be a mere formality. Not so: I was subjected to a 15 minute grilling on who I was, where I was going, how long for, what I was going for. Then the crunch came. Was I employed? "Yes". Who by? "University of Edinburgh". Documentary evidence of that please. "You what?!". By some fluke I was able to produce the letter from USENIX confirming my reservation for the conference. Disappointed, my tormentor slid back under his stone.

Gatwick highlight: the little train out to the satellite terminals.

After a short wait of about 2 hours we were on the plane, taxied up to runway, and at last, we’re staying exactly where we are because of a problem with the flight plan. Another 2 hours on the ground, we are told. But no! The clever pilot files another flight plan which means we can take off in 30 minutes. We took on more fuel (didn’t think they did that with passengers on board...) because the new route is a bit longer than the original, and we’re off.

The flight passed like this. Lunch, drinks, sleep, drinks, snack, drinks, crap film, sleep, arrive Baltimore, where no-one has told them they’ve got the time wrong by 5 hours. I take a bus to my Hotel. As soon as we got there I wished I’d taken a taxi. I checked into the Sheraton Inner Harbor, which was the conference hotel. A quick shower, a wander round the vicinity of the hotel, a few beers (well it said "Beer" on the label) and bed. So this is America!

Sunday 13th

I have the day to myself. There don’t seem to be many UNIX folk about, everyone looks pretty normal. I guess most delegates will be arriving later or even tomorrow morning. I enjoyed the day, albeit solitary, finding the harb(o)ur area very pleasant despite being very busy indeed. I popped into the National Aquarium, and emerged some 3½ hours later. An amazing place. I’m not sure about keeping dolphins in such places, but I couldn’t help adoring them. They
seemed so intelligent and amazingly gentle. We are told that the aquarium used to have 2 beluga whales, but one night the dolphins killed them. Hmm.

I had a bit of a wander round the town away from the harbo(u)r. I found City Hall, which looked just as I thought a City Hall should look. I came across a Holocaust Monument, a haunting sculpture of emaciated bodies cast in bronze. Odd: it was erected only 10 years ago. Also odd were all the CND stickers on official buildings. No, No, they are "Nuclear Fallout Shelter" signs. As I saw no sign of nuclear fallout I guess I must have missed it.

About 1700 I was feeling peckish. Conference registration started at 1800, so I decided to eat before then. Knowing the local specialty cuisine to be fresh seafood, especially crabs, I find a promising restaurant and have a beer and a chicken curry. The sauce was delicious, the chicken a cross between a Long Island Red and an Old Boot.

Registration. More delegates about now, but mostly they have travelled in small groups. Having registered, I hung about for a while, hoping to find some other individuals with whom I might chance to share a few "beers". I’d just about given up, when I heard someone say, in the appropriate vernacular, "Glasgow"! I followed my ears and found a wee chubby guy giving his name as Jim Reid. We work 45 miles apart, but had taken different airlines by different routes on different days to get to the same place. To the bar then, which is called "Orioles" after the local Major League Baseball team. Jim soon makes chums with the locals. When asked what he wants to drink, he replies "Anything not brewed in America."

How they warmed to him! A quick shot of the "Terminator 2" video game, where we do little to help Arnie, walk round the harbour, beers, bed.

Monday 14th

Tutorials today. Jim was attending the Kerberos session, I was on "Internet System Administrators Tutorial". The material was fine, although there was very little that was new to me. The tutorial was in fact at its best when the tutors (Ed DeHart and Barbara Fraser, both from CERT) digressed and began talking about past incidents, dealing with vendors, and dealing with end users. Confidence in CERT has apparently reached the level where large institutions are now reporting potentially embarrassing incidents to CERT, trusting them not to divulge names of individuals or organisations. A step forward!

After the tutorial sessions were over, Jim and I set forth to locate a nearby "Brew Pub". This we did, and we enjoyed a couple of beers outside in the sunshine, which was very pleasant having been cooped up all day. Unfortunately Jim found his beer overly refreshing; a breeze caught his plastic mug, which slid easily across the table and deposited most of the beer neatly in Jim’s lap. I halved what I had left with Jim, we drank up and left. As we left, wet-groined Jim informed the barmaid that his seat was damp. She looked at him, and was not well pleased. They may have burned the chair. We headed back to the hotel. It was hard to keep a straight face, with Jim’s aspect and demeanour suggesting that he usually wore a badge proclaiming "Proud to be Incontinent".

A taxi to "Little Italy"; the taxi driver talks
to us, we understand not. If he'd been a
terminal I'd have declared a problem with
baud rate, parity, or both. He gets us
there, and chooses the restaurant for us.
He got that right for sure, we had a great
meal. Walk back to the hotel, a beer, help
Arnie a bit, bed.

Tuesday 15th

The conference starts at 0830. I'd like to
know whose idea this was; it'd be a shame
to kill the wrong person. After a few
opening remarks, we are addressed by
Scott Charney of the U.S. Department of
Justice. It's a great shame that this
Keynote Address was not published in the
proceedings, as I was not alone in finding
this one of the highlights of the whole
event. What we had was a senior
government official who was involved in
both determining what legislation was
required, and in determining to some
extent the nature of its implementation. It
was stimulating to hear of the problems
and pitfalls first-hand, and from someone
who actually knew what was going on
where it matters.

Issues such as employees' "expectation of
privacy" at work were discussed. It seems
that a well known printer manufacturer
discovered a small drugs ring at work by
trawling e-mail. The offending employees
were promptly dismissed, and equally
promptly sued successfully for breach of
privacy! Employers are now careful about
telling employees exactly what their
"expectation of privacy" is. Scott informed
us that in the Justice Department,
extpectation of privacy is officially zero.

I can't let this presentation pass without
recounting one tale which we were assured
(the Justice Department can't lie, can it?)
was true.

Back in the days when PCs were New
Technology, a narcotics ring was
uncovered. There was nothing very
strange about this, but for one thing; PCs
were being used to store data on names,
addresses, quantities, dates and the like.
Scott and his team were to be involved in
the raid. The raid was performed without
much excitement, and a PC seized. Scott
and co. powered the machine up, and
indeed there were names, addresses and
more - all good stuff. The PC was lifted,
along with many floppies, and deposited
overnight in a secure area. Next morning
the PC was powered up. Nothing. Not
even DOS. The floppies were tried on
another PC. Blank. No information on
them. They appeared unformatted.

Some time passed before the cause was
found. During further searches of the
apartment, the front door frame was found
to be very highly magnetised; any
magnetic media passing through the door
was wiped.

My boss claims this story to be clearly
apocryphal; I don't see what Scott had to
gain by telling porkies. In any case, it's a
good yarn.

The three papers which followed this
address were based on actual experiences
of cracker activity. The rest of the day
was devoted to tools and methods which
can help in detecting or preventing such
attacks.

That evening a hot buffet was supplied
along with beer and wine. A pleasant
enough time was had by all, though the
buffet was kept hot using gas cylinders.
The resulting aroma made the experience
that of eating good food in a tyre factory.
At 2000 there was a BOF session, so we
took all the left-over beer with us. The
session, which could have been "Break-ins I Have Known and not Loved" was OK, but the mikes were not working properly, making life hard for those near the back.

It being late, we immediately retired to the Orioles bar, where Jim made a major discovery. The Terminator video game had an American attitude: none of this "lose your lives then start all over again" nonsense. It was "lose your life then go buy another one". Armed with this knowledge and every other weapon known to man, we were going well right up to the point where the bar staff refused to give us any more ammunition, I mean quarters. Bed.

Wednesday 16th

It's just as well we had a 0900 start today. The morning sessions were a continuation of the "tools" theme; there is a lot of good stuff out there. I'm not going to discuss the papers in detail; the proceedings are there to do that!

Jim had to leave straight after this session, so lunch was a swift "anything not brewed in America" and goodbye.

The afternoon session was split track, one track being Applied Research, the other MLS. It being a hard choice, I ended up missing both, taking my chance to corner both Ed DeHart and Barb Fraser from CERT, and grousing a lot. Things do seem to have moved on since Edinburgh's dealings with CERT last year, where we were never sure who was responsible for what, and when we would be "allowed" to announce the problem, let alone the solution. We were asked to wait 6 weeks knowing full well that there was a very large number of vulnerable systems out there. We'd had the impression that CERT were waiting for the very last vendor to fix the very last bug before announcing the problem (the BSD lpd hole). I was assured this would no longer happen, and that CERT are considering the publication of their internal problem escalation mechanism.

The event as a whole complete, there were a number more good byes, and a good meal in the hotel. The place seemed rather quiet now, so I went for a walk about the harbou(r), which was never quiet. Back to the hotel about 2000, watched a sitcom with Billy Connelly in it. I wasn't sure what to make of it, and I'm not sure he did either.

No point going to bed yet, much better to go to the bar, where I made the mistake of befriending a wallpaper hanger from New York. Instead of an early night, I ended up drinking some clear liquid that looked like pernod and tasted like petrol. I don't know what it's called but it's easy to spot, it's the one that gives you a stinking hangover.

At last to bed, to sleep, perchance to dream. To wake up, perchance to wish I was dead.

My flight wasn't until 2000, so I had most of the day to fill. An easy task in Baltimore, especially as I spent a couple of hours in the Science Museum, which was designed to keep young kids happy and interested; suited me down to the ground. The climax of this visit was to be a cinema show called "Antarctic, Man's last Conquest" or something. Some cinema: the IMAX screen was five stories high! Most people sat near the back. Realising that by sitting near the front I could fill my peripheral vision, I did so.

The film began, 38 speakers filling the
auditorium with the sound of a glacier shedding an iceberg, hundreds of tons of ice, RIGHT ON TOP OF ME! It was only with great control I avoided looking like Jim a couple of nights before. Marvellous stuff; sit near the back.

A taxi to the airport, and that was it. The journey back to Sunny Musselburgh had begun, bye bye Baltimore.

**European Convex User Conference 92**

(Philip Riebold)

**Oxford, 30 September - 2 October 1992**

This was the first non-UKUUG or EurOpen conference that the FaceSaver service was invited to attend and, as such, it had a distinctly different feel — there were far more suits than sandals (but that’s a continuing trend at similar conferences as well :-). The overall tone of ECUC 92 was understandably more commercial than a UKUUG or EurOpen conference, but some of the events (at least those that I managed to attend) seemed to cross the line between marketing and sales.

The FaceSaver kit was set up on Tuesday night ready for the start of the conference on Wednesday morning (thanks to Richard Murphy from Birkbeck College). Our current setup utilises the UKUUG display boards to good effect, with advertising material ready for people to read while waiting for their picture to be taken. The exhibition area (where we were located) was around the edge of the main council chamber, complete with balcony, organ, and choir stools!

The conference proper started after lunch on Wednesday, but many delegates arrived early (probably to get those rather nice free umbrellas :-). By now Mick Farmer and myself had arrived, so that Richard could return to London for an important meeting. Talk about time-sharing! Since most of the people at this conference had not seen the FaceSaver system in action, we drew quite a lot of interest. Unfortunately, by the end of the conference, we had only captured about 150 of the 250 or so conference attendees. During the last sessions on Friday, we merged information from the delegate registration list (Charles Curran had delegated a couple of Macs to this task) with our FaceSaver data to produce a pictorial delegate list (using a generic picture, taken from that day’s Grauniad, for those delegates who had not had their picture taken). In spite of a combination of the very large PostScript files produced by the FaceSaver system, a slow printer, and the vagaries of working with real-world data, the final list was just completed in time.

The conference sessions were held in parallel in two meeting rooms, whilst the exhibition stands were distributed around the walls of the main hall with tables and chairs in the centre. This was an ideal situation, allowing people to wander around the stands, and to sit down to eat, drink, and talk during the breaks. Interestingly, there was always a small number of delegates milling around the exhibition, reading the books on display or using the terminals attached to a local Convex server.

Catering was by an outside company, rather than Oxford council (being inside their Town Hall), and although the lunches were of the cold salad/buffet type the quality of the food was very good.
Due to reasons beyond our control places were not booked for us at the conference supper and banquet. Personally I wasn’t too bothered about this since it allowed us to investigate the local pubs and restaurants. As was to be expected from a large, old university town the pubs were excellent, with a wide variety of beers available, but unfortunately the prices were comparable to Central London.

Regulars

Bill’s Bit
(Bill Barrett)

UKUUG - The Inside Story Continued

In the last issue I said that next time, if there was a next time, I would pick up the story of the champion polar bear topper. Well, our Editor tells me that there is indeed to be a next time, so ...

In Tromsø, where there was a strong UKUUG contingent for the EurOpen Conference, there was a marvellous sense of being on the fringe of the northern nothingness. We ate in a restaurant where the very room which Amundsen occupied before he set off for the pole was preserved as a kind of shrine. And we marvelled at the exhibits in the museum of polar exploration. In the early days of polar exploration conservation was quite unheard of and the old army maxim "If it moves, salute it" could well have been adapted into "If it moves, shoot it" and would have been highly relevant. Sunil and I were both intrigued by the account of the man who held the record for "topping polar bears" as Sunil so succinctly put it, and our fascination was heightened by the fact that there was a stuffed polar bear in the lobby of our hotel.

The creature held us all in awe. It was vast, even taller than Peter Petersen, and one day we persuaded Jane to step within its embrace - beauty and the beast indeed - and St*W*rt McR*b*r (we are not allowed to reveal people's names of course) unplugged the lobby phone and put it into the creature's huge paw for Jane to speak into. We all sought to devise captions to cover this touching scene. Someone came up with the yuppyish "Will you bear with me?" while someone else capped it with "I can barely hear you". Meanwhile Sunil was snapping away merrily and the Scandinavian guests stood around and studied the performance of Englishmen who, mad dog like, go out in the midnight sun. It was a memorable occasion - as I have proved - but sadly Sunil's photos didn't come out so we have no evidence to put into this journal. Pity.

In the last issue I wrote about UKUUG at the Vienna Conference but there was one little story which I had no room for. One afternoon a group of us were at the desk preparing to leave for the conference dinner, for which trams had been laid on. A delegate approached and appeared to be about to ask a question. He stopped in his tracks and we sought to encourage him by adopting suitable facial expressions. He tried again, mentioned the trams but again failed to say what his question was and went to turn away. This was too much for *ndr*w M*cph*rs*n who was standing nearby. "Try asking" he said simply and it worked. Which probably goes part way to explain why the membership voted him onto Council as the sort of guy needed on that body.
There’s another Vienna story which I like. One of the speakers had an Irish wife and she had a sister (a real sister that is) who was a nun. The nun was invited with her family to the conference dinner and as I arrived at the venue I spotted her at once. Once we were seated I mentioned to Jane that she was present. "Will I recognise her?" asked Jane, not appreciating that she was wearing her habit. "I think so" I responded, "there aren’t many nuns here tonight."

Moving from Vienna to Munich, the social event at that conference was held in a beerhouse (it sounds better in German). It became clear at a certain stage in the proceedings that something was needed to help things continue with a swing and M*ck F*rmm*r had the brainwave of organising an ad hoc EurOpen Song Contest. (Paranthetic irrelevance - have you heard of the meeting which was being held in an hotel and a waiter kept on bringing in bottles of German wine? He was told that enough was enough but still he brought more. Look, said the organiser forcefully, have I not made it clear that we do have enough wine? I’m sorry, sir, the minion replied, but I was told that this was an add hock meeting.) Back to Munich, the idea of a song contest was so crazy that it commended itself and M*ck and I went around the room to the various national groups, cajoling, persuading and generally encouraging everyone to take part.

There was some correspondence in The Times recently which was started by a guy who was called upon, as part of a British group abroad, to sing a traditional British song. They were flummoxed apparently and he asked the readers what they could have sung. That guy should have been present at Munich. The UKUUG group had the benefit of a real chorister and put on a really professional performance of several English and Scottish songs. One couldn’t credit that the whole thing had been dreamed up only just before. Good as they were, however, they were pipped at the post by a Japanese delegate who brought the house down with a truly remarkable performance. It was his first trip to Europe and he must have had quite a tale to tell when he returned home.

Back to the UK and to a UKUUG event which was held at the University of Kent. It was at the time of the Curried eggs scare and the staff were late in opening the breakfast servery. The hungry queueers were getting restless and someone growled "What are they doing?" "Cooking the eggs for the obligatory extra two minutes" another queueer replied.

Another memory of a UKUUG event was of the one held at the University of Liverpool. The venue was at the very end of Penny Lane and just along that road was the reputed site of the famous Strawberry Fields. The Penny Lane signs were, unusually, painted on walls rather than being made of metal. I asked the locals why that was and apparently the council had given up the unequal task of replacing signs removed with monotonous regularity by Beatlemaniacs (many from Japan allegedly).

Well, back from memory lane. As our Editor pointed out, there’s real hard work behind these stories of the UKUUG team spirit, and we have to get on with the business of getting the Winter Conference on the road, as well as dealing with the latest bunch of membership applications and requests for information about the group — which come in regularly I’m pleased to say. So, bye for now...
Solution to Puzzle 2

The original question hints that we’ve got to handle however many arguments are passed to our script. This implies some kind of looping mechanism processing the parameters one by one, since their number is undefined. It’s time to remember how the shell decides what’s an argument (on the command line) and what’s a parameter (inside the script).

An environment variable, IFS, defines those characters used to delimit "words" when parsing input to the Bourne shell. It usually defaults to the so-called whitespace characters (space, horizontal tab, vertical tab). Multiple whitespace characters count as a single separator and arguments containing whitespace must be enclosed within quotes (double quotes allow variable expansion but single quotes don’t). This means that the line

```
p2 Real Programmers "don’t use" 'Pa$cal'
```

invokes the command p2 with four arguments, the third containing a single quote and a space, the fourth containing the dollar character ($cal is not evaluated). Inside the script, the parameters are dealt with from left to right, prefixing them to a local (shell script) variable, so creating a list from right to left

```
#!/bin/sh
#
args=
for p in "$@
   do
     args="$p $args"
   done
echo $args
```

where the construct "$@" stands for the individual parameters, contained in double quotes, separated by spaces. Without any quotes around $@, the result would have been

```
Pa$cal use don’t Programmers Real
```

because any space inside a parameter is not treated as a separator. The alternative construct, $*, yields the same result as $@, except when it’s contained in double quotes. The result of using "$*" would have been

```
Real Programmers don’t use Pa$cal
```

which could be a true statement! I won’t describe the mechanisms invoked here — that’s for you to learn. The lesson from all this is that it’s very easy to forget that the Bourne shell is a sophisticated macro processor that just happens to execute the odd command now and again.

Solution to Puzzle 3

Don’t go rushing to your copy of the last newsletter, wondering where Puzzle 3 cropped up. It was the caption contest on the last page! Since we’ve received very few entries for this prize-giving competition, we’ve decided to keep entries open for a while longer — so send us examples of your dazzling wit encapsulated in an unforgettable caption. In the meantime your outgoing chairman, Sunil Das, has asked us to point out that Jim Reid was not slowly sinking into a quagmire underneath the tent, as was first suggested.

Puzzle 4

We’ve all encountered the situation of typing a command followed by some arguments, only to find an error message such as
Over the years, many command and argument combinations have gone down in history because the error message/response is humorous, such as (Bourne shell)

```
$ rm God
rm: God non-existent
```

or, even worse, this (C shell)

```
% %blow
%blow: no such job
```

Most, if not all, are remembered and collected by avid readers of certain newsgroups. We know, we have the file! Your challenge is to find a new response that’s not a rehash of something gone before. There are new utilities out there that we’re all using, so what about their error reporting? Alternatively, think up original combinations on old favourites. Anything you think of can be tried at your terminal, so what could be easier! Do it today.

Answers, as usual, to me, but note that my e-mail address has undergone a slight transformation (something to do with the cost of electronic mailboxes in Czechoslovakia :-).

**Small Ads**

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<thead>
<tr>
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Calendar of Events

1992
13 Nov, IUUG Conference, Killiney, Ireland
23-27 Nov, EurOpen Conference and Exhibition, Utrecht, The Netherlands
26 Nov, LUUG, University College, London, UK

1993
6-8 Jan, UKUUG/SUKUG Conference, Oxford, UK
25-29 Jan, USENIX, San Diego, California, USA
28 Jan, LUUG, University College, London, UK
15-18 Mar, UniForum, San Francisco, California, USA
3-7 May, EurOpen Conference, Sevilla, Spain
21-25 Jun, USENIX, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA
6-8 Oct, OpenForum 93, Utrecht, The Netherlands

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