Stratford Notes

Stratford has been a Microsoft developer for many years. We do our best to keep up with the latest from Microsoft. If they have anything which will benefit our customer base, we try to make it available to our customers. This may mean that we will recommend a product. It may mean that we will purchase a license for one of their products and include it with our programs. It may take a number of different forms. We have been discussing the soon to be delivered product: Windows 95. This is a version of Windows which will supersede all the present versions of Windows except Windows NT. In March 1995 we received our copy of the "final beta of Windows 95". It is beautiful. Be forewarned, however, it is *completely* different in appearance from all the previous versions of Windows. At first we did not like it. We were going to go back to the old version. After going through the *guided tour* that comes with it, we decided that maybe there were some things that were improved and maybe we would try it for a while. As you may have guessed, we found one change that made us decide to change. Now that we have a more open mind, we have noticed many other things which will be fun to explore. There is a free trial subscription to the new Microsoft Network. There is also a direct connection to the Internet.

Internet news We attended the Internet World 95 exhibition in San Jose CA on April 11. The best description that we have seen for this show is "feeding frenzy". The San Jose Convention Center is not large enough for so many people. They may need to have it at the Moscone Center in San Francisco or in Las Vegas next year. *EMAIL and WEB WORLD* is another show at the Santa Clara Convention Center (also San Jose CA) April 20th. I hope this Internet thing is not a big bubble that is going to burst. We only know of a few of our customers who use the Internet at this time. It may be the dominate means of communication, next to the telephone, in the future.

Today's　Highlights

....A Note From Our President
....From the EDI (ECS) Corner......
....Supply Prices
....800 Support Line Notes
....Faxing Options
....Windows 95 Questions & Answers
....New Manual
....Advanced Tip of the Month

Microsoft Network, the Internet, America Online, Prodigy, CompuServe and others may someday be a replacement for the US Postal service for routine mail. Recently I needed to send some specifications to a programmer in another state. A fax was not appropriate because the programmer needed to see a file and work with it. The programmer would make some changes and then compile it. She would then send it back to me. I could run the program and then send a message back. All of this was done by using the Internet. We sent messages back and forth in a few hours. We were able to get some program changes very quickly at a very low cost. This would have been extremely inefficient using the US Postal service.

Stratford is listed on the Internet with a software distributor "store front" named ICP Software Information Center. Their Internet address is http://www.icp.com/softinfo/

Microsoft is doing many things to promote the Internet. They are giving away *Internet Assistant*. This is an add-on to Microsoft Word that will allow you to publish information on the Internet. 130,000 Microsoft customers access fpt.microsoft.com (Microsoft's Internet server) each week.

If you have an Internet account, please send a mail message to stratfrd@ix.netcom.com.

FROM THE EDI CORNER.......

TRENDS

Travelers and Metropolitan Life Insurance have combined their group healthcare businesses to form MetraHealth Insurance. They will discontinue their "Local" format by July 1, 1995. They will only accept the National Standard Format (NSF) or ANSI 837. MetraHealth is also eliminating magnetic tapes and diskettes. **MetraHealth will accept 100% of claims electronically including surgical claims that need operative reports.** HCFA has established June 30, 1996 as the sunset date for non-standard formats.

SUPPLY PRICES

Recently our paper supplier notified us of significant supply price increases. The price increases are due to the shortage of paper. Have you checked the paper company stock prices? Look at Scott Paper. Notice the range of prices for one year.

800 SUPPORT LINE NOTES

Some people have called the 800 number and were told that their account was "inactive". This does not mean that you do not have support. This only means that either you do not have a prepaid support contract or your billing account with Stratford did not have a zero balance when we closed our books that month. Our books close around the first or second business day of the month. This affected fewer than 10 customers in March. They may use the 650 579 4120 number. The status is updated only one time each month. If there is a posting or a billing problem, we have a way to make the 800 number active during the month.

Customers that pay their bill in full each month lower our costs. The 800 line is an extended service that may only be used by customers who pay in full. We are not charging extra for this service so it is reserved for those customers. The regular service line has not changed.

Every customer has a unique 6 digit account number on their monthly statement. We are working on a system to allow you to enter this number with your touch tone phone to get priority service. Most customers can find this number by pressing F3 while in the Stratford program. All the changes we are making are for one purpose. We want to give better service at the same or reduced cost.

FAXING OPTIONS

Last month's newsletter had an article on the value of faxing. Often we receive a fax and we have trouble reading it. We then must call and ask. Our fax is on a dedicated server with "Microsoft-At-Work". This is a technology that is included with Windows for Workgroups at no extra charge. It is not easy to setup but when you do, some interesting things are possible. For example, if the person sending us a fax has Microsoft-At-Work, the fax will be sent as a file. It is exactly like the original on the sender's computer. We can then print it as a fax or we can edit it if it is a text file. It is designed to be used as E-Mail but since you can attach a file, it works like a regular fax and a communication program. If you have PC Plus like most of our customers you can make your computer into a bulletin board by pressing `[ALT+Q]`. We can call your computer and get files from you or send files to you. Be sure to quit PC Plus when you are finished so a "hacker" cannot get into your computer.

WINDOWS 95
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. Stratford is a Microsoft Developer, right? Is Stratford going to make its software work with Windows 95.

A. Yes. It already does. It has worked perfectly with no significant changes since the first beta release of Windows 95 that we tried. Our software has been a true 32 bit product since the summer of 1993. To realize the benefits you must have at least 4 megabytes of memory. Windows 95 requires 4 megabytes of memory for similar reasons. At this time we plan to have a separate program that conforms to the new Microsoft standard for "Windows 95 programs". We have already coded enough of it to know that you will probably want at least a 486/66 computer with 8 megabytes of memory to use it. Our new program will be "object oriented". This gives many new and wonderful features but it takes a powerful computer to do the processing.

Q. What changes will I see if I change to Windows 95?

A. The changes that we have noticed about Windows 95 make the computer easier to use. No, it will not do any of the "Star Trek" type of magic that you see on TV, at least not this version. You cannot talk to it in your normal voice. Those things are still in the future. Rather, the changes you will notice show that Microsoft is spending a great deal of money and time talking to users. They use focus groups, "usability labs" and other techniques that only a very large and profitable company can afford to do. They have used the data that they have accumulated to redesign the user interface. For example, they have found that many people have trouble "double clicking", so they have almost eliminated it. User preferences such as color and screen layout are stored in a registry similar to Windows NT. This will allow a user to have the screen look the way that he/she wants even if he/she uses a different workstation on a network. Two people could use the same computer and have the screen look different because of their login name. For networked computers, there is a move away from the old drive letter method of addressing different disks. You will be able to name the disks in the same way that many large computers do. You will be able to have long file names. For example, instead of calling your letter to Dr. Jones "JONES1.DOC", you could call it: "Letter To Dr Jones about Susie Baker."

Another feature is the "Exchange Client". This will be more important in the coming years because it will allow you to easily access the Internet and most other on-line services. You will have one universal inbox where all of your electronic mail will go. This can include E-Mail, faxes and maybe even software updates from Stratford.

If you use several programs at the same time, you are probably used to seeing error messages like: "out of memory". Your system may crash for no known reason. In previous versions of Windows there are only 2 "16 bit *heaps*" of memory 64K (64,000) bytes each for resources. You can check how much is available by choosing the Help/About box from the Program Manager. Windows 95 has added "32 bit *heaps*" as well as much improved memory management.

We are planning to make extensive use of the built in mail and schedule capabilities. In the future we will be able to offer features that only programs that cost thousands of dollars can offer today.

We have offices that have one or more satellite locations which need access to patient information. At this time you need a dial-up or a leased telephone line that must connect the satellite office with the main computer in order to access the information. In the future the databases can be "replicated" between the locations. It is true that one of the databases will possibly not be 100% current at any given moment, but that may not be necessary. Depending upon how important it is to be current, you can just replicate more times during the day. For some offices this can save hundreds of dollars per month in the phone bill. Also, no special hardware is required.
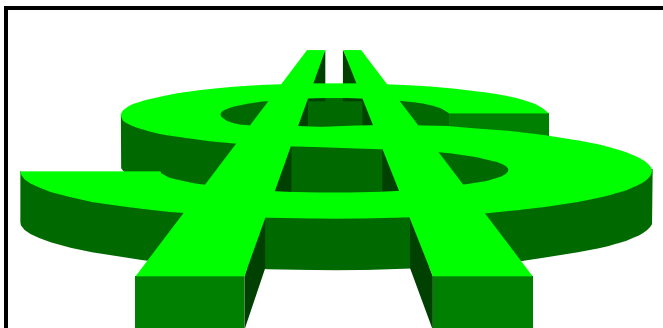
For users with larger, networked computers there is a built-in agent for automating the backups. Everyone with a network has a server. There is an application that everyone on the network must access. An example is the patient database. Many users also have their accounts payable and word-processing on an individual workstation. This way, some of the information is not available to everyone. By automating the backup, you can backup some files on the server and some files on individual workstations.

If you have an Internet account you can get up to date information about Windows 95 by sending the message: SUBSCRIBE WINNEWS to enews@microsoft.nwnet.com.
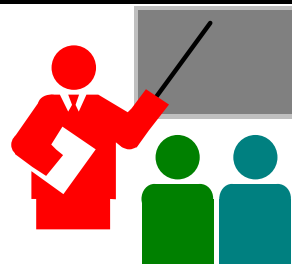
NEW MANUAL

We have them. The price is $9.95. As in the past, we will provide it at no charge if: (1) you subscribe to software support continuously (2) your account is fully paid each month (3) you send your old manual (we must have the front and back covers) with a request (4) you pay for the shipping. We have had customers send their manual to us with no identification. We have no way to know who sent it. Please staple a card or a copy of an old statement to identify it. You can put your 6 digit account number from your monthly statement on the cover and stamp your name. We have many customers with the same name. We do not want your manual to go to the wrong person!

Stratford will pay *you* $100 for each unrelated person (no spouses please!!) you refer who purchases SHS® Healthcare Management Software at full price ($895). Simply call or write to give us your referral, we will take care of the rest!

ADVANCED TIP OF THE MONTH
CUSTOMIZING STATEMENTS

Q. I have a copy of the Microsoft Windows 95 beta. Do you have any recommendations for setting up the Stratford programs?

A. Yes. If you had the Stratford program setup in Windows 3.1x, then it will be setup automatically after you load the Windows 95 beta. Under Windows 95 we recommend running the Stratford programs in a "true window" instead of "full screen mode".

Press the Start button with the mouse. Select "programs". Then select "Stratford Programs" or whatever you called the Stratford group icon in the Windows 3.1x program.

Click on the menu item and the Stratford program should start and run perfectly without making any changes. Most people will see the Stratford program in a full screen just as it was before loading the Windows 95 beta.

To make a nice "Windows 95" style screen, press [ALT+ENTER] to create a small window. Click the upper left corner to get the control menu. Click on properties to get the *property sheet*. Select the *screen tab* and mark window instead of "full screen". Next select the *font tab* and mark auto font size. Next, behind the *program tab* and choose maximize for the Run: item. Click on OK at the bottom of the *property sheet*. The *tool bar* at the bottom of the screen makes switching between programs very easy.