



# INTER FACE

JULY/AUGUST 1992

ISTC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

## EXTERNAL DATABASES

As the federal government's knowledge department, ISTC's credibility rests on its being able to access and share data with Canada's business and scientific communities.



Librarian **Nicole Ménard** helps **Jay Illingworth** with CD-ROM search.

The Library's extensive collection of business databases makes searching, retrieving and sharing information easier than ever before. The Library offers four databases stored on compact discs with read only memory (CD-ROMs) that anyone can use to search for information. The Library also offers more than 500 online external databases that trained Library staff will search on request. The regional offices also have access to five CD-ROM databases through the Business Service Centres.

CD-ROMs are easy to use, but you can sign up for an introductory session with the Library to make sure you can take advantage of all of their features. These databases give you access to business profiles, information on international business activity, financial data on Canadian companies, and business

and management abstracts. They also reference trade journals, articles, newspapers and reports. Retrieved information may be displayed in many ways, such as:

- directory-type listings of companies, associations or officials;
- in-depth financial statements for particular companies;
- bibliographies and abstracts that refer to journals, conference papers or other original sources; and
- complete articles.

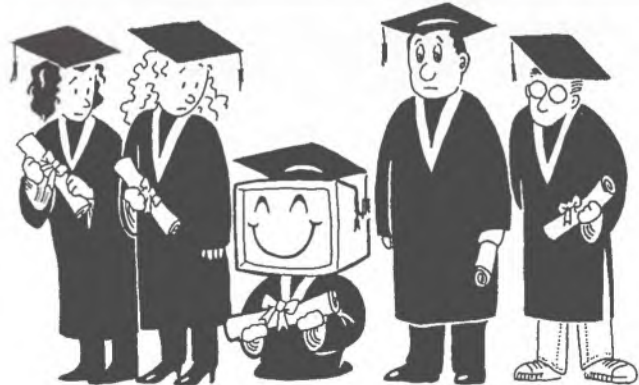
One enthusiastic fan, **Jay Illingworth**, Policy Research and Advocacy, AEP, uses the CD-ROMs to retrieve information for policy managers and regional offices. Recently Jay searched possibilities for marketing a board game and the feasibility of wildlife ranching in Alberta. "CD-ROM databases are a good resource for accessing a large pool of information that would normally be cumbersome to search," says Jay. He also likes how easy it is to download retrieved information from either an online system or CD-ROM to a diskette, or send it by e-mail to regional offices.

*CD-ROM is a powerful resource that has helped our knowledge base – we are a knowledge department, it is our product.*

Jay Illingworth,  
Policy Research and  
Advocacy, Aboriginal  
Economic Programs

Increased access to CD-ROM products through the Corporate Network may also be possible, but this access must be studied first to make sure there will be no technical problems.

*continued on page 4*



### NAME THAT 'TOON

Send us your ideas for a caption for this cartoon.  
Last issue's winning caption is on page 2.



## WORTH REPEATING

*If we don't master this technology as a tool, we will be mastered by its ends and subjugated to its technique.*

**Heather Menzies,**  
author of *Computers on the Job*

Do you know a quote related to informatics that's 'worth repeating'? If you do, please send it to the *Interface* editor.

## POTPOURRI

- IMB has been piloting ZipCode, a Canadian software product that lets you easily look up about 900,000 Canadian postal codes.

The software has been installed in IMB and on some ITRO/CGSI LANs and is being piloted to measure its usefulness and to determine whether the department can use a site license. Currently the Establishment System team uses ZipCode to check addresses. Call **Bruce Gale**, IMB, at 954-2612 for more information.

- The Federal Research Directorate, Science and Technology, is trying to put science and technology on the map. Its objective is to describe and display the locations of all laboratories and research activities across Canada. For this task, the directorate chose to use a geographic information system (GIS) that can manage and analyze information and map the results. This project can help industry and others find current, one-stop geographic and demographic information to help them make critical business decisions on topics like relocation or product marketing. The demographic files will be based on the latest Statistics Canada Census and will include other information such as:

- sources of R&D;
- locations of universities;
- availability of skilled workers;
- age groups; and
- financial profiles of the local population.

PUBLISHED BY:  
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BRANCH  
FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION

Scientific, financial and economic departments, industrial firms (especially small- and medium-sized businesses), the public, and information and technology brokers are the target users for this system.

To get involved in this project or to get more information, contact **Greg Fernet** at (613) 990-8733.

- Regional employees connected to the Peer-to-Peer e-mail system on the Corporate Network can now access their local mailbox through a remote mail utility, R-Mail, available at the headquarters Walk-In Centre, Room 306D.

This menu-driven package displays the names of all of the LANs using Peer-to-Peer mail over the Corporate Network. To use it, choose your LAN, then enter your LAN user-ID and password.

R-Mail will soon be available in the Regional Support Centre and ISTC's regional offices. ■

## CONTEST WINNERS

Congratulations to the two winners of last issue's **Name that 'Toon** contest:

*Gee, Doc, I hate to admit it, but I was out on the town last night with Michelangelo and I think I caught a virus!*

**(Joan Lachaine, Human Resources Branch)**

*I think I picked up some sort of virus at Michelangelo's birthday party when someone slipped me a bad disk. Tell me the truth, Doc. Is it terminal?* **(Brian Torrie, PS 2000 Plus Secretariat)** ■



## WALK-IN CENTRE – NEW SCANNER

The Walk-In Centre has a new Hewlett-Packard ScanJet IIC that can scan text or colour graphics at high resolution (400 DPI). Optical character recognition (OCR) software is used to examine the text and numbers and save them in WordPerfect or Lotus 1-2-3 format. Software for scanning graphics saves graphic images in several formats.

The better the quality of the work being scanned, the better the result. Good clean print will scan in almost error-free, but faxes or old photocopies do not work as well.

Photographs, logos or drawings can be scanned and used to add visual interest to a report. To import a scanned image (saved in .PCX or .TIF format) into WordPerfect, press Alt-F9 and select the Graphics/Figure/Create options. Print the file using "High" on the Graphics Quality option of the Print command on a good laser printer, and you'll have a professional-looking document. ■

---

## TECHIE TALK

A **driver** is a program that intercepts data, analyzes it and assigns new values if needed. It acts like a filter: it retains the information it is asked for and ignores the rest.

A **keyboard driver** assigns new values to some keys. DOS comes with optional keyboard drivers for several languages. However, some keyboards place some keys in slightly different locations – for example, it may include an extra key between 'Z' and the left shift key – so some of these drivers may have to be adjusted. Some software uses its own keyboard drivers: BILING51.WPK is a bilingual driver for WordPerfect 5.1.

A **screen driver** intercepts values sent to the screen and changes them to a value that the specific screen is designed to display, such as uppercase accented characters or certain types of graphics. Display drivers work only with a specific type of screen – for example CGA, monochrome, EGA or VGA.

**Printer drivers** typically belong to a specific application. In WordPerfect, the printer driver sends to the selected printer the proper codes for formatting like bold, underline, form feed and special characters. These codes are not standard and can be different for every printer. ■

---

## ACT NOW!

During National Access Awareness Week, June 1-7, 1992, the Planning and Employment Equity Division, Human Resources Branch and several sectors arranged for ISTC to provide areas

*Send your Interface mail through e-mail (INTERFACE) or by mail, addressed to the Interface Editor, ISTC, Room 340F, 235 Queen Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5.*

in which disabled people could work. This gave many ISTC employees the chance to work side by side with a disabled person, some with special needs like adaptive computer technology.

Access to the workplace is everyone's right and awareness about such access should be year-round. A unique informatics group has been working at Environment Canada (EC) to promote such awareness. The Adaptive Computer Technology (ACT) Centre was originally set up to work with disabled employees at EC, but now provides services to all government departments for a fee.

The ACT Centre looks at technology that compensates for visual, motor and sensory impairment, and makes recommendations about such technology, including:

- a mouse-driven screen-enlarging system;
- a screen-reading voice synthesizer;
- Handiword, a word 'predictor'; and
- DragonDictate, a hands-free voice recognition system.

For more information on ACT and workplace access, contact **Lise Dupont**, Employment Equity Coordinator, HRB at (613) 954-3612. ■

---

## DEAR LANLORD

by *Pat Raby, Science Sector*

**Q:** How can I avoid recreating similar memos and distribution lists when using e-mail?

**A:** Many people know about the Microsoft Mail (Network Courier) "Folders" function, but few use it. Even those who use Folders as an electronic filing cabinet, do not know that any of the stored documents can easily be copied, edited and delivered again.

### Storing your template

To store your document or template:

- create a folder by highlighting "Options" from the menu
- select the "Folders" option, then "Create"

When the cover of the folder is displayed, you can personalize it for easy retrieval by filling in the blanks.

### Composing and saving a message

To store your template or memo:

- press the Up arrow or Esc key to return to the menu
- select "Storage" followed by "Save"

When your inventory of available folders is displayed, highlight the folder you want and press Enter. Although your folder is no longer displayed, the document has been copied and stored, so you can safely transmit the original.

### Retrieving, modifying and using a document

To retrieve and modify your memo:

- select "Compose" and use the Up arrow or Esc key to return to the menu bar
- choose "Storage" followed by "Load"
- select the folder you want and highlight the document or distribution list you want to modify

To change your distribution list, bring up the complete list and use the spacebar to flag or unflag recipients.

For more information contact **Lydia Slattery**, Network Courier Support, IMB, at 954-2518. ■

### FRENCH CHARACTERS IN E-MAIL

Some employees have noticed that letters with French accents in e-mail messages won't print.

This problem is caused by conflicting character standards between the printer and the e-mail software. Most products do share common standards for representing North American English characters and certain French characters, called the **core set**, and these characters should print correctly. However, some uppercase French characters are not standard.

#### CORE SET

é, è, ê, ë, î, ï, ô, õ, à, â, ô, ç, É, Ü and Ç

The obvious solution is to move to one universal standard. Unfortunately, this is difficult since not all printers and software support the same standards. Some don't support French characters at all. And although many new printers and software packages are supporting these characters, there is still no consensus on a Universal Standard.

Treasury Board (TB) sets standards for federal government equipment. When suitable, TB adopts existing standards. However, its power is limited because this is an international issue, involving many national governments, industries and academic communities. Because of this, TB has not yet set a standard for the federal government.

In the meantime, IMB plans to develop a departmental standard, a fairly difficult task since it must consider mainframe and mini computers and any future TB standards.

The problem can frequently be solved by making sure that the character standard used by the software is compatible with the standard used by the printer. If a stand-alone printer is connected to a workstation, the standard it requires may not be compatible with the standards for the LAN, so both printers may not be available for French characters at the same time.

Also, setting printer standards for one application may cause another one to fail to print French characters. This is the case for an application like e-mail, which is used mainly to move and display text rather than to print it. WordPerfect, on the other hand, is used mainly to print text, so it can print all French characters, even though they may not be displayed correctly on the screen.

If the core set of e-mail French characters is not printing, contact your local LAN manager. For later models of laser printers, the solution may be as simple as selecting the PC-8 code set from the printer menu. ■

### EXTERNAL DATABASES

*continued from page 1*

In the meantime, Materials Branch, in an effort to give employees computer access to programs specific to its mandate, is piloting LAN versions of two CD-ROM databases. The first pilot database, Standard and Poors, gives quarterly and annual financial information on 12,000 companies listed on U.S. stock exchanges and on 575 Canadian firms. Features include company and industry comparisons, powerful graphics capability, report production and an interface with Lotus 1-2-3.

The second pilot LAN database is the Trade Information Enquiry and Retrieval System (TIERS), developed by Statistics Canada. This commodity-based package lists the quantity and value of Canadian import and export trade by country, province, state, month and year.

**Brian Kinsley**, Materials Branch, finds the \$40,000 per year cost of the two databases a bargain. "Information and knowledge are the tools of our trade," he says.

For details on the available external database and CD-ROM products, or for an introductory training session on the various CD-ROM products, contact the Library at (613) 954-2728. In the regions, contact your local Business Service Centre. ■

*Some of the opinions expressed in this publication do not represent the official views of IMB. Thanks to all who contributed to this issue.*