

Acorn II: What Is It? What Does It Mean?

Project ACORN was established in January 1994. The ACORN project was a cornerstone initiative towards migration from a mainframe dominant "world" to a distributed computing environment that provided for a substantial increase in end-user computing (PCs) and productivity.

Since Project ACORN has been implemented, the number of end-user devices have more than doubled (2,052 of which are personal computers). Approximately 50% of the personal computers installed have mainframe access. The original network infrastructure was designed with a target size of approximately 1,200 personal computers. The current configuration has greatly exceeded the designed capacity.

The continuing growth of the personal computer network has brought about the need to further enhance the network infrastructure in the areas of capacity, redundancy, and additional functionality. This jeopardizes the ability to provide a consistent and dependable network response as the use of the existing personal computers and network applications increase.

Many county departments are dependent on the network to effectively deliver their services to their customers. The mainframe continues to provide services as before but the mainframe terminal has been superseded by the personal computer with mainframe access. These same personal computers also provide word processing support, financial spreadsheet analysis, presentation preparation, electronic mail, file exchange, and small database application services. With this increased dependency on the personal computer network, the need for a reliable network support structure becomes critical. To increase the reliability of the network, redundant devices need to be introduced to assure a means of providing network services with little or no interruption. Thus, Project ACORN II was born out of the need to enhance the current network infrastructure.

With the implementation of Project ACORN II the current network infrastructure will be enhanced to provide a consistent and dependable network response as the use of the existing personal computers and network applications increases. Redundant and/or spare devices will also be introduced to assure a means of providing network services with little or no interruption thereby increasing the reliability of the network.

Finally, Project ACORN II will provide increased capacity and growth. ACORN II will position the County to take advantage of existing and emerging technologies in order to provide services to its citizenry in a cost effective manner.

Protect Your Work - Use VirusScan

Information Technology has received a number of calls at the Help Desk regarding computer viruses that have infected PCs through a diskette (specifically the Monkey B and ANTI.EXE viruses).

Although the occurrence of a virus is rare it is extremely important to safeguard yourself from the possibility of a virus infecting your PC.

What is a Virus? A virus is a software program which infects computer disks and disrupts the operation of a PC. Viruses range from those which simply display a message or play a tune, to those that destroy all data on the disk. Some viruses are undetectable, lying dormant until a specific date or other condition is met. In addition to infecting a specific file on a disk, some viruses are programmed to replicate and attach themselves to other files.

Where do Viruses Come From?

Viruses come from various sources:

- Copying and opening a file from an infected diskette
- Copying, installing, or running a program from an infected floppy diskette
- Running infected programs downloaded from the Internet or a bulletin board.

Why Check for a Virus? To protect data and keep viruses from spreading, the following guidelines and procedures are recommended:

- **Always back up files on a regular basis;**
- Limit access to the PC;
- Keep strict control over passwords;
- Never load and operate non-licensed software on your PC;
- Frequently run the VirusScan software;
- Scan any new disk before using it on the PC; and
- Never try to fix the effects of a virus yourself. If you suspect that a virus has infected a file, do not use your PC or diskettes used on this PC and call the Software Help Desk at 858-8812 immediately.

Do You Need to Check for a Virus on the PC? As part of the WordPerfect 6.1 upgrade, a Virus Scanning application was loaded on all PCs to automatically check the hard drive every ten hours when the computer is turned on. As a result you may notice that the PC will take a few extra minutes to boot up. If the last virus scan took place more than 10 hours from the time the machine was last turned on, the scan will take place. If less than 10 hours, the hard drive will not be scanned. When a potential virus has been detected you will be alerted. Once alerted contact the Software Help Desk at Information Technology immediately. Although it may take a few minutes longer with the Virus Scan Software to boot up your machine, the benefit is well worth the wait.

Can You Check for a Virus on a Floppy Diskette? Yes, after WordPerfect 6.1 has been installed on the computer there will be an **Acorn Network Services** program group icon located in the Program Manager. This program group icon contains icons for GroupWise, Notify, File Manager, VirusScan, and Mainframe (if applicable).

To protect the PC and files, please review the Virus Scan Documentation/Instructions available on the County-wide publish drive "O". The file is located in the Information Technology training directory, "**o:\infotech\training\virus.doc**". This document was created in WordPerfect 5.2 for Windows. The file may be opened in the WordPerfect 5.2 or 6.1 application. The file is read-only, so please feel free to open, review, and print as needed.

Please be aware that if the PC has become infected with a virus, Information Technology, in all likelihood, will not be able to save your files.

Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

County-Wide Publish Drive: It's Growing!

The County-wide publish drive was established as a common directory which the majority of network PC users could easily find information published by other County departments. This eliminates and/or reduces the need of mailing copies of the published information. The user simply accesses the publish drive and reviews or prints the document as needed (primarily in a WordPerfect format).

Information Technology has published the Training Schedule, Course Descriptions, and Registration Form on the County-wide publish drive since March 1996. The most recent Training Schedule can be accessed in "**o:\infotech\training\schedule.doc**". Several important documents have also been added to the Information Technology training directory such as the Virus Scan Documentation/Instructions and Backup Documentation/Instructions. In addition, the Department Acquired Software Standards policy has been published in "**o:\infotech\standard**".

The Clerk/Register of Deeds Office has published the Board of Commissioners Minutes and Resolutions. The Minutes from September 24, 1993 to present can be found in "**o:\clerkrod\minutes**". The Resolutions from January 1991 to present can be found in "**o:\clerkrod\resolutn**".

The Employee Suggestion Form can now be found in "**o:\general\suggest\sugform**".

Finally, The Personnel Department has created a publish drive "**o:\persnnel**". Training information will be published in this directory in the near future.

News from the Help Desk! Safe-guarding your Personal BIF File

Frequently a call will come into the Help Desk from a user indicating that their Toolbar, which they have personalized, has defaulted back to the original Toolbar that came with WordPerfect. Or, that their QuickList which they customized, in the Open File dialog box, has no items listed. When a change is made to WordPerfect's default settings a personal *.bif file is created.

Each time the user opens WordPerfect, the personal *.bif file is read and used. When a corruption occurs in the personal *.bif file the user will lose all of the personalized preferences that they set up inside of WordPerfect and all settings revert back to default.

Following is a list of steps which allow a user to backup their preferences, so in the future, they will not lose all of their personal preferences.

Backing Up The Personal *.Bif File

1. Open **WordPerfect**.
2. **Customize** the Preferences.
3. Exit **WordPerfect**.
4. Open **Main...File Manager**.
5. Select **View... Sort By Type**.
6. In **c:\windows** directory, select the personal *.bif file *The first four digits of your last name will be displayed in your personal *.bif file. (For example, John Smith's personal bif file is **SMIT5COT.BIF**.)*
7. **Copy** the file into the **c:\data** directory.

Note: Copying to the c:\data directory will make it so that if the user decides to use the Backup tools, it will also backup the personal *.bif file.

Restoring The Personal *.Bif File

1. Open **File Manager**.
2. In the **c:\data** directory, select the personal *.bif file (ex. **SMIT5COT.BIF**).
3. **Copy** the file back into the **c:\windows** directory.
4. A "**File Already Exists**" Error will come up...**Select Overwrite**.
5. **Cold Boot** the PC.

Note: After cold booting the user should have their personal preferences returned.

If you have questions regarding copying your personal *.bif file, call the Software Help Desk at 858-8812.

New Help Desk System on Its Way!

In August, the Board of Commissioners approved the purchase of Q-Support, an integrated Help Desk Management System.

With the implementation of a new help desk management system, Information Technology will be able to better capture, act on, and track help requests from the customer community. We will be able to improve customer support and response times, as well as improve communications and customer expectations. This system also has an Inventory Management System, which will allow us to link inventory and call history information to each PC/User. As a result, when a call comes into the help desk, we will have complete information specific to that PC, i.e.; hardware configuration, type of software loaded, etc.

Over the next several months, Information Technology will begin implementing the new system and we will keep you posted as we proceed.

GroupWise - Saving Your Calendar

Many individuals have found GroupWise to be an essential scheduling tool. Unfortunately, when the GroupWise database is cleaned by the Network Administrator, the user will find that scheduled items are removed from the calendar as well as mail messages. Calendar items can also be lost when a corruption occurs in the user's GroupWise database.

Many users utilize the Calendar feature in GroupWise to historically track appointments and/or schedules. When items are removed from the calendar the historical data is lost. The GroupWise calendar can be saved in a table format in WordPerfect for just this purpose. The GroupWise Archive feature can also be used, but the user must select one calendar entry at a time and archive it. Also, there is a possibility that should the GroupWise database become corrupt, information stored in the Archive could be lost as well.

Saving a Calendar as a WordPerfect File

1. Select **File...Print Calendar**.
2. Select the **Calendar Type** you want to save (i.e., Month, Day Organizer, Weekly).
3. Select **Create WP File**.
4. Type a path and filename for the file (i.e., under **c:\wpdocs** create a subdirectory for **calendar** and then create a filename, **jan1996.cal**).
5. Select **OK**.

Note: The calendar is now a table in WordPerfect.

Opening a Calendar in WordPerfect

1. Open **WordPerfect**
2. Open the file (i.e., **jan1996.cal**).

Documentation for saving your GroupWise calendar to WordPerfect is also available on the County-wide publish drive, “**o:\infotech\training\calendar**”.

Department Acquired Software Update

The Department of Information Technology, with the assistance of the Personnel Department recently distributed the Computer Hardware/Software Usage and License Policy to all County Merit System Employees. This Policy reinforces the County’s commitment to comply with legal requirements pertaining to the use of computer hardware and software. It communicates the requirements and limitations of purchase, use and ownership of computer hardware and software. A copy of the policy can also be reviewed online on the County-wide publish drive, specifically “**o:\infotech\standand\standard.wpd**”.

Internet Pilot Project Update

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Oakland County had initiated and concluded an Internet Outbound Pilot Project. In June, Information Technology presented a final report summarizing the findings and recommendations to the Strategic Planning Committee. Copies of this report are available upon request by contacting Tina Ramey at 858-4082 or Janette Wager at 858-0893.

The Pilot Project demonstrated and documented many potential business uses of the Internet for County departments. The use of the Internet enabled individuals to communicate globally, research topics of interest and save time and money. Information Technology’s finding was that the Internet can be used as an effective business tool for County business.

ESP Program at Work: New Laptop Loaner Policy

The Department of Information Technology has initiated a process to loan laptop computers to County departments and their employees. The laptops are loaded with the standard County software: WordPerfect 6.1, Lotus 1-2-3, and Microsoft Access. GroupWise and Network capabilities will not be available on the laptops.

Laptops will be loaned for a maximum of 7 days/1 calendar week on a “First Come/First Serve” basis. Laptops can be reserved 30 days in advance from the pick up date.

Documentation on the Laptop Loaner Procedures and the Reservation Form can be found on the County-wide publish drive, specifically “o:\infotech\training\loaner.doc”. If you do not have access to the publish drive and would like a copy of the procedures sent to you, please contact Tina Ramey at 858-4082 or Janette Wager at 858-0893

Technology Stars - A Call to Arms

Chih-Fang Tsai of Information Technology, was recently awarded the Oracle Master certification.

To receive this certification, Chih-Fang had to complete various course work in the area of DataBase Administration.

Oracle is a software product that allows you to download current mainframe data into usable database format and provides programming tools for creating forms, reports or browsing capabilities.

Congratulations, Chih-Fang. Keep up the good work!

If you know someone that has used technology for improving service or if you have found a shortcut, trick or tip that has cut time from performing a task, let us know.

Frequently operating issues resolved by one department through technology, can satisfy another department's issues. Please forward your ideas to Janette Wager, Editor, Department of Information Technology.