

Year 2000! Here It Comes

In the March 1997 Information Technology Quarterly, an article was written which introduced the Year 2000 Project. It was entitled "Year 2000! What Awaits Us". The article mentioned that the Board of Commissioners had approved a Year 2000 resolution on March 6, 1997. This resolution had approved the implementation of a County-wide Year 2000 Project. The project was started on April 1, 1997.

Whether we like it or not, the Year 2000 is rapidly approaching, maybe sooner than we want it to. Depending on where we are in life now, we will begin to make plans for what the future holds (children growing up, retirement, etc.) and what we can do to prepare ourselves for when the time comes.

In the Information Technology arena, we also need to look to the future. What has been discovered globally is that the Year 2000 creates a special problem in the computer world. Why you ask. Well, many of you currently use at least one computer system in which you enter dated information using numbers, an example is 01/05/97. The year is currently entered as the last two digits (in the above example the 97 actually stands for 1997). This creates a problem in the Year 2000 because dates entered as 01/05/00 will reflect January 5, 1900 not January 5, 2000.

During the time when many of today's applications and programs were being developed, computer storage space was very expensive. Thus, any situation when storage could be saved, cost could be reduced. To save storage space, many application programmers and database administrators designed systems that would only record and store dates with a two digit year instead of the four digit which included century. This was deemed acceptable as the life span for most applications was expected to be such that they would be obsolete and replaced prior to the turn of the century. Additionally, century date problems are not exclusive to custom applications but are also an issue for software packages purchased from third party vendors.

So what you say. Well, think of the above scenario in personal terms.

Scenario #1: You get married on March 3, 2003. After the honeymoon you receive a copy of your marriage certificate. You could find that the date of your marriage is March 3, 1903. Do you feel like you've been married for 100 years?

Scenario #2: You should be receiving an annual step increase to the five year step for a Clerk III on February 15, 2001. The month of February comes and goes with no step increase. When you ask about the increase, it's discovered that you should have received it February 15, 1901. Sometimes it feels that you've worked for 100 years but you know that you haven't.

December 1997, IT Quarterly Newsletter Archive

The Year 2000 problem is a world-wide problem. Is it possible that you could discover that you should have paid off a home mortgage 100 years ago? Or, that your credit card is no longer valid because it expired 100 years ago. All organizations are beginning to think of this global problem and what affect the Year 2000 will have on their business.

That is why the County has chosen to begin exploring this problem now versus waiting until later. Oakland County's Year 2000 project is divided into two phases. Phase I - the Impact Assessment Phase consisted of preparation of a business plan to document the tactical and strategic objectives for the Year 2000 conversion, an analysis of current operating systems and risk assessment, as well as a detailed project plan for Phase II. Phase II - is the actual conversion of programs identified in Phase I, testing and implementation of applications as Year 2000 compliant systems. The Year 2000 project will focus on 26 Mainframe applications and 3,275 mainframe programs.

The Departments/Divisions of Reimbursement, Animal Control, Prosecutor's, and District Court have worked very closely with Information Technology and consultants on converting programs used in their respective areas during Phase II. Conversion of programs in both Reimbursement and Animal Control will be completed by the end of 1997. The Campaign Finance System will also be completed by the end of 1997. District Court's programs are in the final testing phase of conversion. The Prosecutor's program conversion has also been started.

After the first of the year 1998, Information Technology will be going back to the Board of Commissioners for additional funding to complete the Year 2000 project. It is estimated that the whole effort will take approximately 54,000 job hours to complete or approximately 12 to 18 months to complete the Year 2000 compliance project.

As a County employee working with data, you can begin thinking of the Year 2000 and how it could impact the data you use. Think of the applications you currently use. Do you use WordPerfect and store date specific information? You should probably begin entering data with the four-digit year code (i.e., 03/05/1998). What about Access? Do you currently use an Access database which stores date sensitive data? Access date fields can be formatted to reflect a four-digit year code. How about Lotus? Should any formatting changes be made to make it Year 2000 Compliant? These are only a few ideas to get you started.

Look for more news/updates on the Year 2000 project in the next several issues of the Information Technology Quarterly. If you have any ideas of how this impacts your work or the County and how you can change the way information is stored in WordPerfect, Lotus, Access, etc. to comply with the Year 2000 requirements please pass this information along to Tina Ramey. We can begin sharing ideas with one another so that we are prepared for the future.

Dial-in Problems Using ReachOut Update

Individuals are still occasionally experiencing problems dialing in to the County using ReachOut. When attempting to dial in they get a message "Your call cannot be completed as dialed. Please hang up and try again. 2CD". Information Technology has discovered that many times the problem has turned out to be that the hotel/location has a "local" service but did not have "long distance" service for data transmission. If you encounter the above problem, please contact the hotel's front desk and ensure that they have "long distance" service for data transmission. If you will need to dial in to the County network you may want to contact the hotel prior to making reservations to ensure that you will not experience any problems.

New Class Offered at the Information Technology Training Center

A new class has been added to the first quarter schedule; WordPerfect 6.1 Basics for the Non-Typist. This is a two-half day class which is geared to the student who has little or no knowledge of basic WordPerfect word processing functions and who is a non-typist. The student will learn how to create, save, edit, format, and print documents. Also covered are spell checking, getting help, and file management. This class is best suited for management, supervisory, and non-clerical staff who need a general overview of basic WordPerfect word processing functions. Students who are interested in taking the Intermediate and Advanced WordPerfect classes will need to complete the four half day Introduction to WordPerfect 6.1 class.

As always, the first quarter, 1998 training schedule is available on the Publish drive "O", specifically "o:\infotech\training\schedule.doc". If you cannot find a class listed on the schedule which you need to take, or the dates and times are not convenient for you, please contact the receptionist at Information Technology. Your name can be placed on a waiting list. When any class has a waiting list of six or more individuals, Information Technology will attempt to open an additional class.

Logging Help Desk Calls Electronically Update

Since September 1997, 40 calls have been electronically logged by County employees to the Information Technology Help Desks. **QMail** was designed to integrate the Q-Support help desk system with GroupWise. This provides customers with the ability to log **non-urgent** help desk calls directly into Q-Support. It also allows the help desk staff to electronically update customers on current call status and, in some instances, resolve calls by automatically e-mailing the customer instructions on how to fix the problem at their convenience.

December 1997, IT Quarterly Newsletter Archive

Please refer to the September 1997 Information Technology Quarterly for instructions on how to send a help desk call via GroupWise E-Mail. Also, please remember that any urgent call should still be placed by telephone to allow expedient resolution of the problem. When logging calls electronically please remember that only the message area text is entered into Q-Support; therefore, the help desk staff will not have access to subject area or attachments you may refer to in the message.

The Hardware Help Desk can be reached at 858-5265 and is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week. The Software Help Desk can be reached at 858-8812 and is available Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 5:00pm.

Hey! The Publish Drive "O" is Expanding

Have you taken a look at the Publish Drive "O" lately? During the last several months many useful documents have been added to the drive for your review.

Have you thought to yourself, "I wish I could be sure the printed telephone directory contained the most up-to-date information." Well, wish no more. The County's telephone directory is now on the County's "O" drive in WordPerfect format. Access to these documents can be obtained by going to the "O" drive then **facmngmt** directory and **phonelst** subdirectory (o:\facmngmt\phonelst). Each department/division is listed in individual sections. Also, there are alphabetical, employee services, and fax sections included in this directory. These documents are read-only. When changes are needed to your department/division sections, please e-mail Brenda Larkin with the changes and she will update the appropriate files. As a side note, an alphabetical telephone directory is also available on Oakland County's Start Page on the Internet. By clicking on the "S" block all employees with the last name beginning with "S" will be displayed.

What about ESP Suggestions. Do you think you have a great idea but want to be sure that you're the only one who has submitted this idea? Well, a list of topics that have been turned in as employee suggestions are now available on the "O" drive, specifically "o:\persnnel\esp\suglist.wk4". This is a Lotus file so be sure to open it in the Lotus application. If you attempt to open it in WordPerfect, the file will be converted and could possibly lock up your PC. Don't forget the Employee Suggestion Forms are also available on the "O" drive (in WordPerfect format), in the same directory.

Interested in knowing the County holidays for the next few years? Check out the Holiday Schedules for 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001 on the "O" drive. The Personnel Department has added the above mentioned Holiday Schedules on the Publish Drive for your information. The following files are WordPerfect documents:

o:\persnnel\schedule\98holida
o:\persnnel\schedule\99holida
o:\persnnel\schedule\00holida
o:\persnnel\schedule\01holida

December 1997, IT Quarterly Newsletter Archive

Speaking of schedules, the Board of Commissioners' meeting calendar for the remainder of 1997 has been placed on the "O" drive, specifically "o:\calendar\1997yrly" (in WordPerfect format). The 1998 meeting calendar may not be available until mid-February when the Committee's have finalized their meeting dates.

Don't forget, for those of you who use the MB forms. The most up-to-date MB forms (WordPerfect format) can also be found on the "O" drive in the "o:\mgmtbdgt\forms" directory. The forms were recently changed to meet the needs and requirements of the new financial system (HRFIS).

Interested in stats? Development and Planning has some interesting information on the "O" drive. Under the directory "o:\devplan\cvtstats" you can find detailed information on Oakland County and each of its local communities. Check this out. Population, income, occupation, building activity, SEV, and other data, by community, is available for you to use for grant writing and program evaluation, or any other uses. This information is provided by the Marketing and Research Group in the Development and Planning Division and will be updated as new data is available.

Information Technology also added several instructional documents on the "O" drive during the last couple of months. Backup, Restore and Copy Disk procedures for Windows 95 have been added, specifically "o:\infotech\training\win95bu.pro". Documentation on how to save and archive GroupWise items; creating rules in GroupWise, and granting access to your mailbox to a proxy can all be found on the "O" drive in the following files:

o:\infotech\training\calendar.wpd
o:\infotech\training\rules.grp
o:\infotech\training\proxy.wpd

All of the above information has been added to the Publish Drive since the first of September. Check the "O" drive out periodically, you may find that it contains the information you have been looking for.

Tip From the Help Desk: Remapping the Keyboard

How many times has this happened to you? You are typing along and then notice that the screen is filled with gibberish, or worse yet, your enter key does not work. The Information Technology Help Desk frequently get calls fitting the above description. The following steps can be tried to attempt to fix the keyboard on your own:

Fix #1

1. At same time, hold down **[Ctrl]** and **[Alt]** keys (left side of keyboard).
2. As you hold down those keys, press the **[Suspnd Macro]** key.
3. Release all keys.
4. Program light should blink and then stop.

5. If there is a **[Ctrl]** and **[Alt]** on right side of space bar, repeat step 1, 2, and 3 on that side. (You may need to exit the application you are in for the above fix to work.)

If Fix #1 does not work, try Fix #2.

Fix #2

6. Press **[Remap]** once.
7. Press **[Ctrl]** twice (left side of keyboard).
8. Press **[Alt]** twice (left side of keyboard).
9. Press **[Remap]** once.
10. Do Fix #1. (Again, you may need to exit the application you are in for the above fix to work.)

If Fix #1 and Fix #2 does not work, try Fix #3.

Fix #3

1. Close all applications.
2. Exit Windows.
3. Turn off PC.
4. Hold down the **[Suspnd Macro]** key.
5. While continuing to hold the **[Suspnd Macro]** key, turn PC on.
6. After PC has booted up, release the **[Suspnd Macro]** key.

If Fix #1, Fix #2, and Fix #3 does not work, GIVE UP and call the Software Help Desk at 858-8812.

Network Password: Change It Before Time Runs Out

Every 45 days you will be prompted to change your network password. Please remember that although it appears to be optional - it's not. You have five grace logons in which to change your network password. Remember that a password must be at least five characters in length and can be a combination of either letters and/or numbers.

For security purposes, **NEVER** write your password down. If you let your network password expire, you will need to contact the Software Help Desk at 858-8812 to have your password reset to a temporary one. While you are waiting to receive a new temporary password you will not be able to access any network drives, print to a network printer, or use GroupWise to receive your e-mail. To avoid any inconvenience, Information Technology recommends that you change your password as soon as you are prompted.

New Technology: GroupWise 5.2

The County of Oakland will be upgrading to GroupWise 5.2. The anticipated time frame for the upgrade is Spring 1998.

The upgrade will primarily provide enhanced efficiency of the electronic mail system; although there are some enhancements to the GroupWise application which will be beneficial to the user. Some of the new features in GroupWise 5.2 are Universal Mailbox, Shared Folders, Conversation Threading, Item Conversion, GroupWise WorkFlow, and integration with the Internet.

As mentioned above, the primary reason for the upgrade is to enhance the efficiency of the GroupWise system. To enhance the efficiency of the GroupWise system, all documents and message attachments are compressed while they are stored and in transit. This compression optimizes "over-the-wire" performance and decreases disk storage requirements. With GroupWise 4.1 the documents and message attachments were moved through the network and delivered from the sender's post office to the recipient's post office. With GroupWise 5.2 the files (documents and messages) stay in their original location and a pointer is sent to the recipient. The recipient can then open the mail message and view the document and message attachments by following the pointer back to the original location. This will significantly decrease the network bottleneck effect when sending messages with attachments to several people at the same time.