EXHIBIT N

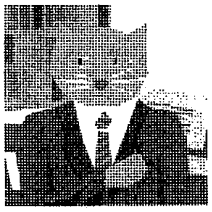
RUMOR CENTRAL

Spence parties with a little help from his friends

Spence, where are you going?"

"Off to call Paul the artist and let him know that he did a great job on the T-shirts for my party."

Spence was surveying the scene at the packed Metropolis Nite Club in Las Vegas, where the Katt and his merry tipsters were using NetWorld+Interop as an occasion to celebrate 10 years of tip gathering on the PC Week beat. As the booze flowed, the tip pace picked up as the party-goers donned their Katt-as-Sgt.-Pepper T-shirts and schmoozed the night away.



Spencer F. Katt

"You sure you want to call him now? It's 5 a.m. on the East Coast."

"Got to hand out those compliments when they come to mind."

Spencer paused in his dialing to listen to a tale about a new Compaq ProLiant 8000 eight-processor machine offering something called third-level tertiary cache. The pause was enough to make Spencer think better of calling Paul in the wee hours. Better instead to wake up a couple of Redmondians. After all, it was only 2 a.m. on the West Coast.

"The more I mess around inside Windows for Workgroups 3.11, the more I see a secret beta of Chicago," Spence's Redmond tipster blabbed after a cup of java brought him out of his slumber. "There are some pieces of code in there that have the distinct appearance of a 32-bit DOS/Windows slipped in for a field test."

The Katt, ever vigilant for accuracy, asked for more.

"RMM.D32, which calls itself a 'real mode mapper' with Version 4.0, refers to DOS386, which is the name of the Chicago kernel," tattled the tipster. The tipster said he didn't know much more about exactly what RMM was. Spence said he'd see if he could drum up some more info from his ranks.

Another example of WFW 3.11 doing the Chicago masquerade could be found in Spence's old friend VFAT, the tipster said before heading back to his bunk. The guts of the 32-bit file-access driver are so different from DOS and Win 3.1, it looks like a Chicago driver that time-traveled back a version. For instance, it breaks any DOS program (mostly TSRs) that relies on a coherent picture of Int 21h calls, which are the way most DOS features are invoked.

"VFAT takes Windows into the realm of genuine 32-bit operating systems, as DOS goes to sleep when Windows for Workgroups wakes up. And now I'm going back to sleep. Next time call earlier. We tuck in pretty early up here in the great Northwest."

"They don't tuck in at all here in Vegas," Spence replied. "Do me a favor, snoop up a bit more info on the Marvel project that Allen and Gates are cooking up. I hear that after that Ren and Stimpy communications front end was deep-sixed by Chairman Bill, Marvel has become the next great communications hope." Before turning his attention back to his now-gabbing guests, Spence made a note to tell Chairman Bill that the names in the running for the new disk-compression product—DoubleDrive, ExtraSpace, and DriveSpace—were all silly beyond belief.

Spence assured a second tipster that the high-tech world will stand in awe when Multiport releases an alpha version of its Windows-on-Unix emulation product in July. A tip about Paper Software, of Woodstock, N.Y., shipping the Workplace Shell for DOS product for IBM by year's end was a bit more interesting.

As the Vegas sun began to rise, Spence headed back to the casinos.

"I think I'll send one of these collector-item T-shirts to the killer tip of the week for a couple of weeks," mused Spence as he greeted the bleary-eyed blackjack players.

Have a tip? Call Rumor Central at (617) 393-3700; on MCI, it's SKATT; on CompuServe, use 72631,107; on the Internet, it's spencer@pcweek.ziff.com; or try ZiffNet's PC Week forum on CompuServe; or fax the Katt at (617) 393-3795.

MIND THE GAP

Cirque's GlidePoint technology could cure track ball-mung blues

Track ball mung got you down? Sick of carrying that mouse around in your briefcase? Cirque's GlidePoint technology might be just the answer.

This innovative portable pointing device (available with a PS/2-style DIN connector for $99 or as an OEM part) does away with the mechanical moving parts of traditional pointing devices. Resembling a 1.5-by-2.25-inch rectangular piece of chalkboard encased in plastic, the GlidePoint works not with pressure, but by electrostatic current.

Jim Louderback

The GlidePoint, which uses any standard DOS or Windows mouse driver, operates by using the moisture in the finger to create a distortion in the electrical field above the surface area. The electronics in the GlidePoint determine the center of that distortion, transferring movement into pointer location.

Resembling a rectangular piece of chalkboard encased in plastic, the GlidePoint works not with pressure, but by electrostatic current.

I found the GlidePoint to be natural and fundamentally obvious, and very easy to learn compared with those first painful experiences with track balls and eraserheads. Unlike other portable pointing devices, the GlidePoint worked well for both broad-stroke movements like those needed for Solitaire and the finely detailed placement required for applications such as Minesweeper.

Broader tests with eight PC Week Corporate Partners mirrored my initial impressions.

Each CP was almost immediately productive with the GlidePoint, and they unanimously preferred its simplicity and functionality over other notebook pointing devices. Some even wished for a desktop unit so they could replace their mice. One CP with especially dry fingers, however, found the unit somewhat less responsive at first.

The unit tested included two buttons at the bottom, but I found the alternate method of tapping once or twice on the glide-surface to be far more natural and effective. And although the double-click-and-drag motion required to hold and move objects on-screen is slightly non-standard, I was able to easily adapt to it.

Unlike IBM's pointing stick and some track balls, the GlidePoint requires lifting your hands from the keyboard, reducing productivity. In addition, I experienced strange pain in my upper-arm muscles when using the GlidePoint without a palm rest. Of course, proper OEM positioning in a unit such as the Apple PowerBook could alleviate both problems.

The GlidePoint offers relative positioning only, so I had to pick up my finger when reaching the edge of the electrostatic surface before moving the pointer to the edge of the screen. Plans are in the works for an absolute driver that will allow the pointing surface to mirror the screen.

Cirque's GlidePoint makes an extremely solid, lightweight addition to any notebook lacking a functional pointing device.

The unit was completely impervious to pretzels and other crumbs, and it performed considerably better than either a pointing stick or a track ball in my suntan-lotion benchmark.

And while the GlidePoint fares well as an add-on product, I'm really excited about its OEM potential. GlidePoint technology could easily improve some of our favorite portable PCs, including the Handbook, PowerBook, and Aero. If rumors are to be believed, it soon will.

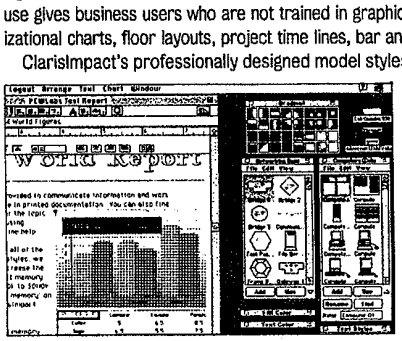
Cirque is located in Salt Lake City and can be contacted at (801) 467-1100.

Jim Louderback can be reached on MCI Mail (JLOUDERBACK), CompuServe (72241,427), and the Internet (Louderback@radiomail.net).

PCWEEK LABS PRODUCT OF THE WEEK

Claris Corp.'s **ClarisImpact 1.0 for Macintosh** is a mainstream business-graphics program designed to ease the burden of creating charts and presentations. The $399 program's outstanding ease of use gives business users who are not trained in graphics illustration a quick road to well-designed organizational charts, floor layouts, project time lines, bar and pie charts, slide presentations, and calendars.

ClarisImpact's professionally designed model styles for charts and presentations are a great time-saver and an excellent means of standardizing graphic design of charts and presentations across a department or corporation.



Also useful is the smart installer, which automatically installs the correct version of the program—either Power Macintosh or 680X0.

Claris plans to release a Windows version of the program this summer.

Claris, of Santa Clara, Calif., can be reached at (408) 727-8227.